

SLAVERY

CONDEMNED BY CHRISTIANITY.

BY THE LATE

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"What is slavery, and what does it do?"

"It belies the doctrines—it contradicts the precepts—it resists the power—it sets at defiance the sanctions of religion—it is the tempter, and the murderer, and the tomb of virtue."

Dr Thomson.

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THE sermon and speeches of Dr Thomson now reprinted, exhibit forcibly the decided and enlightened views entertained by him on the subject of slavery. Unfortunately for the happiness of mankind, the opinions still prevalent in Christendom, in relation to this question, render the publication of these able productions at the present moment no less important and seasonable, than when they first issued consecutively from the press. The former of these speeches was delivered at a meeting called by the Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society, in October 1830: On that occasion, Dr Thomson had been invited to attend, and address the friends of the institution, but declined, intimating his intention, if present, to bring forward his own particular views on abolition. At the meeting, after a series of resolutions had been proposed by the Dean of Faculty, and seconded by Dr Ritchie,* Dr Thomson rose from the midst of the assembly, and requested permission to state the conclusions at which he had arrived. In a few em-

* Dr Ritchie supported the proposition of Dr Thomson at the subsequent meeting.

phatic sentences he discharged his task, but the effect of his statement, as remarkable for its clearness as its pathos, was electric. With one voice an enlightened and influential audience called for the adoption of the suggestion with which he had concluded; that the word "immediate" be embodied in the resolutions.

The subsequent address, the substance of a speech delivered a few weeks after at another meeting called by the Anti-Slavery Society, in accordance with his views, is an admirable development of his sentiments, and was responded to by the country at large with a cordiality and significance, that intimated plainly a quick interruption to that course of iniquity and oppression, that had for ages disgraced the colonial policy of the British nation.

The discourse prefixed is taken from a volume of "Sermons on various subjects," published some years before, and evinces that if Dr Thomson was bold in giving public expression to a novel opinion, it was not till that opinion had been submitted to the test of sober reflection and religious truth. The principles avowed by him have not escaped animadversion, and much logic and sophistry have been expended on either side of the Atlantic, in attempting to demonstrate their futility or danger. Self-interest has pleaded for delay, and sought to postpone an act of

justice to a "convenient" season, and biblical learning, confident in its deductions, has denied that the appointed promulgators of the gospel demanded instant release for the slave. On the former plea Dr Thomson remarks, that sin is not forsaken by degrees, but at once, nor to-morrow accepted as the season of duty; and to the latter allegation he replies,* "Its preachers did not say to slave-holders, or to legislators, 'You must immediately set all slaves at liberty!' But they said what was tantamount to this, and what could not but be received as a communication from the great Ruler of the world, without producing that effect." The tyranny of Nero was not denounced, nor the absolute propriety of the husband and parent in his wife and child expressly attacked by the first teachers of Christianity; but principles were inculcated and lessons enforced by them, directly proscriptive of these and every other form of injustice and oppression. In vain is it urged that the requirements of the law of reciprocity and love were less definite and imperative when they came fresh from the lips of the Mediator of the better covenant, than when they fell to be received and obeyed in the last times. In virtue of the finished work and passion of the great Surety, "the law of commandments in ordinances" and its yoke of bondage ceased to

* Speech p. 89.

bind the consciences of men, and henceforth the law of charity, in all its integrity, and mighty in the liberty of an unveiled gospel, stood forth the test and rule of Christian profession throughout the earth. There is reason to believe that Dr Thomson was not ignorant of the stringent views entertained by Dr M'Leod and the Reformed Presbytery in America, in reference to the duty of denying religious fellowship to the slave-owner, nor uninfluenced by their example and decision in assuming the advanced position he occupied in the anti-slavery field on this side of the Atlantic. The Christian philanthropist who affirmed that holding property in man was essentially sinful, and that all the teachings of Scripture were declarative of the principle of immediate emancipation, was not far from arriving at the conclusion that religious fellowship ought not to be extended to the slave-holder. It is needless to speculate farther on the ulterior measures that might have been adopted by Dr Thomson. Death suddenly intervened, and cut short his toils and his anxious preparations at the moment in promotion of the cause of abolition, but not until he had seen the pillars that upheld the whole frame-work of slavery tremble in his grasp. A few years added to his life would have enabled him to appeal to experience and the results of eman-

icipation in the British Colonies, in vindication of his own bold and onward course, and confirmed his reliance on the power of those Christian and pacific principles which he developed to subvert long-established error, and reconstitute society, without commotion or peril, out of its first and essential elements. The following sketch of his character by Dr M'Crie is the delineation of a friend, an equal, and an historian. Differing from Dr Thomson in physical temperament, but resembling him in accuracy of powers of discrimination and solidity of religious conviction, the author of the *Lives of Knox and Melville* was too observant, from his comparative retirement, of whatever might affect the best interests of his country, not to appreciate highly the labours of a man who brought his great endowments effectually to bear on the various questions relative to religion and morals, that agitated the public mind in his day. Acting in separate spheres, independently of each other, and sometimes in opposition, the rivalry of these Christian associates was that of usefulness, and their removal from the present scene has left a blank in the church and community that would require the combined energies of many gifted intellects to supply.

“During the excitement caused by the sudden death of a public man, cut down in the prime of

life, and in the midst of a career of extensive usefulness, it is easy to pronounce a panegyric, but difficult to delineate a character which shall be free from the exaggeration of existing feeling, and recommend itself to the unbiassed judgment of cool reflection. Rarely has such a deep sensation been produced as by the recent removal of Dr Thomson; but in few instances, we are persuaded, has there been less reason, on the ground of temporary excitation, for making abatements from the regret and lamentation so loudly and unequivocally expressed. He was so well known, his character and talents were so strongly marked, and they were so much of that description which all classes of men can appreciate, that the circumstances of his death did not create the interest, but only gave expression to that which already existed in the public mind.

“Those who saw Dr Thomson once, knew him; intimacy gave them a deeper insight into his character, but furnished no grounds for altering the opinion which they had at first been led to form. Simplicity—which is an essential element in all minds of superior mould—marked his appearance, his reasoning, his eloquence, and his whole conduct. All that he said or did was direct, straight-forward, and unaffected; there was no labouring for effect, no paltering in a double sense. His talents were such as would have raised him to eminence in any profession or public walk of life which he might have chosen—a vigorous understanding, an active and ardent mind, with powers of close and persevering application. He made himself master in a short

time of any subject to which he found it necessary to direct his attention, had all his knowledge at perfect command, expressed himself with the utmost perspicuity, ease, and energy, and when roused by the greatness of his subject, or by the nature of the opposition which he encountered, his bold and masterly eloquence produced an effect, especially on a popular assembly, far beyond that which depends on the sallies of imagination, or the dazzling brilliancy of fancy-work. Nor was he less distinguished for his moral qualities, among which shone conspicuously an honest, firm, unflinching, fearless independence of mind, which prompted him uniformly to adopt and pursue that course which his conscience told him was right, indifferent to personal consequences, and regardless of the frowns and threats of the powerful.

“ Besides the instructions of his worthy father, it was Dr Thomson's felicity to enjoy the intimate friendship of the venerable Sir Henry Moncrieff, who early discovered his rising talents, and freely imparted to him the stores of his own vigorous and matured mind, and of an experience acquired during the long period in which he had taken a leading part in the counsels of the national church. Though Dr Thomson was known as a popular and able preacher from the time he first entered on the ministry, the powers of his mind were not fully called forth and developed until his appointment to St George's. He entered on this charge with a deep sense of the importance of the station, as one of the largest parishes of the metropolis, containing a po-

pulation of the most highly educated class of society, and not without the knowledge that there was in the minds of a part of those among whom he was called to labour, a prepossession against the peculiar doctrines which had always held a prominent place in his public ministrations. But he had not long occupied that pulpit, when, in spite of the delicate situation in which he was placed, by more than one public event, which obliged him to give a practical testimony (displeasing to many in high places) in favour of the parity of Presbyterian worship, and the independence of the Church of Scotland, he disappointed those who had foreboded his ill success, and exceeded the expectations of such of his friends as had the greatest confidence in his talents. By the ability and eloquence of his discourses, by the assiduity and prudence of his more private ministrations, and by the affectionate solicitude which he evinced for the spiritual interests of those committed to his care, he not only dissipated every unfavourable impression, but seated himself so firmly in the hearts of his people, that, long before his lamented death, no clergyman in this city, established or dissenting, was more cordially revered and beloved by his congregation. Nothing endeared him to them so much and so deservedly as the attention he paid to the young and the sick; and of the happy art which he possessed of communicating instruction to the former, and administering advice and consolation to the latter, there are many pleasing and, it is to be hoped, lasting memorials.

“Dr Thomson was decidedly evangelical in his

doctrinal sentiments, which he did not disguise or hold back in his public discourses; but he was a practical preacher, and, instead of indulging in abstruse speculations or philosophical disquisition, made it his grand aim to impress the truths of the gospel on the hearts of his hearers. Attached to the Church of Scotland from principle, not from convenience or accident, he made no pretensions to that indiscriminating and spurious liberality which puts all forms of ecclesiastical polity and communion on a level; but in his sentiments and feelings he was liberal in the truest sense of the word; could distinguish between a spirit of sectarianism and conscientious secession; never assumed the airs of a churchman in his intercourse with dissenters, co-operated with them in every good work, and cherished a respect for all faithful ministers, which was founded not only on the principles of toleration and good will, but on the conviction that their labours were useful in supplying that lack of service on the part of his own church, and of counteracting those abuses in her administration, which he never scrupled on any proper occasion to confess and deplore.

“It is well known that Dr Thomson belonged to that party in the Church of Scotland, which has defended the rights of the people in opposition to the rigorous enforcement of the law of patronage; and in advocating this cause in the church courts, he has, for many years, displayed his unrivalled talents as a public speaker, sustained by an intrepidity which was unawed by power, and a fortitude which was proof against overwhelming majorities. Of late

years he has devoted a great portion of his labours to the defence of the pure circulation of the Scriptures, and the emancipation of the degraded negroes in the West Indies; and in both causes, he has displayed his characteristic ability, zeal for truth, and uncompromising and indignant reprobation of every species of dishonesty, injustice, and oppression. His exertions in behalf of the doctrines and standards of the church, against some recent heresies and delusions, afford an additional proof, not only of his unwearied zeal in behalf of that sacred cause to which he devoted all his energies, but of his readiness, at all times, to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.'

"Great as Dr Thomson's popularity was (and few men in his sphere of life ever rose so high in popular favour,) he was not exposed to the woe denounced against those 'of whom all men speak well.' He had his detractors and enemies, who waited for his halting, and were prepared to magnify and blazon his faults. Of him it may be said, as of another Christian patriot, no man ever loved or hated him moderately. This was the inevitable consequence of his great talents, and the rough contests in which he was involved. His generous spirit raised him above the indulgence of envy and every jealous feeling, but it made him less tolerant of those who displayed these mean vices. When convinced of the justice of a cause, and satisfied of its magnitude, he threw his whole soul into it, summoned all his powers to its defence, and assailed its adversaries, not only with strong arguments, but with sharp,

pointed, and poignant sarcasm; but unless he perceived insincerity, malignity, or perverseness, his own feelings were too acute and too just to permit him gratuitously to wound those of others. That his zeal was always reined by prudence; that his ardour of mind never hurried him to a precipitate conclusion, or led him to magnify the subject in debate; that his mind was never warped by party feeling; and that he never indulged the love of victory, or sought to humble a teasing or pragmatic adversary, are positions which his true friends will not maintain. But his ablest opponents will admit, that in all the great questions in which he distinguished himself, he acted conscientiously; that he was an open, manly, and honourable adversary; and that though he was sometimes intemperate, he was never disingenuous. Dr Thomson was by constitution a reformer; he felt a strong sympathy with those great men who, in a former age, won renown by assailing the hydra of error, and of civil and religious tyranny; and his character partook of theirs. In particular he bore no inconsiderable resemblance to Luther, both in excellencies and defects—his leonine nobleness and potency, his masculine eloquence, his facetiousness and pleasantry, the fondness which he showed for the fascinating charms of music, and the irritability and vehemence which he occasionally exhibited, to which some will add the necessity which this imposed on him to make retractions, which, while they threw a partial shade over his fame, taught his admirers the needful lesson, that he was a man subject to like passions and infirmities with

others. But the fact is, though hitherto known to few, and the time is now come for revealing it, that some of those effusions which were most objectionable, and exposed him to the greatest obloquy, were neither composed by Dr Thomson, nor seen by him until they were published to the world; and that in one instance, which has given rise to the most unsparing abuse, he paid the expenses of a prosecution, and submitted to make a public apology, for an offence of which he was innocent as the child unborn, rather than give up the name of the friend who was morally responsible for the deed;—an example of generous self-devotion which has few parallels.

“To his other talents, Dr Thomson added a singular capacity for business, which not only qualified him for taking an active part in the Church Courts, but rendered him highly useful to those public charities of which the clergy of Edinburgh are officially managers, and to the different voluntary societies with which he was connected. This caused unceasing demands on his time and exertions, which, joined to his other labours, were sufficient to wear out the most robust constitution, and he at last sunk under their weight.

“In private life, Dr Thomson was every thing that is amiable and engaging. He was mild, and gentle, and cheerful;—deeply tender and acutely sensitive in his strongest affections; most faithful and true in his attachments of friendship—kind-hearted and indulgent to all with whom he had intercourse. His firm adherence to principle, when he thought principle involved, whatever appearance

of severity it may have presented to those who saw him only as a public character, had no taint of harshness in his private life; and unbending as he certainly was in principle, he never failed to receive with kindness what was addressed to his reason in the spirit of friendship. It may indeed be said with truth, that, great as were his public merits, and deplorable the public loss in his death, yet to those who had the happiness to live with him in habits of intimacy, the deepest and the bitterest feeling still is, the separation from a man who possessed so many of the finest and most amiable sensibilities of the human heart. It was around his own family hearth, and in the circle of his intimate acquaintances, that Dr Thomson was peculiarly delightful. In him the lion and the lamb may be said to have met together. It was equally natural in him to play with a child, and to enter the lists with a practised polemic. He could be gay without levity, and grave without moroseness. His frank and bland manners, the equable flow of his cheerfulness and good humour, and the information which he possessed on almost every subject, made his company to be courted by persons of all classes. He could mix with men of the world without compromising his principles, or lowering his character as a minister of the gospel; and his presence was enough to repress any thing that had the semblance of irreligion.

“The loss of such a man, and at such a time, is incalculable. His example and spirit had a wholesome and refreshing, an exhilarating and elevating

influence, on the society in which he moved; and even the agitation which he produced when he was in his stormy moods, was salutary,—like the hurricane, (his own favourite image, and the last which he employed in public,) purifying the moral atmosphere, and freeing it from the selfishness, and duplicity, and time-serving, with which it was overcharged."

The future biographer may fill up the details of this portrait, but can hardly expect to add to the felicity or vividness of its outline. Its graphic fidelity administered consolation at first to many who bewailed an irreparable loss, and its review will aid in recalling to remembrance the image of an instructor, as anxious to assuage the sorrows, as fearless, on the call of duty and right reason, to reprove the misdeeds of his fellow-men.

J. D.

EDINBURGH, March 1, 1847.

SERMON.

SLAVERY NOT SANCTIONED BUT CONDEMNED BY CHRISTIANITY.

JOHN VIII. 36.

IF THE SON, THEREFORE, SHALL MAKE YOU FREE, YE SHALL BE
FREE INDEED.

OUR Saviour evidently refers here to spiritual freedom, as compared with temporal freedom. And of the infinite value and superiority of the former he is anxious to convey a forcible impression to the minds of the Jews, who foolishly allowed themselves to be entirely occupied with the latter.

That spiritual freedom is infinitely valuable and superior we cannot entertain a doubt, when we recollect that it refers to the soul,—to our deliverance from guilt, and corruption, and death, and hell; and that while it implies the blessings which stand opposed to these, it stretches into the regions, and is commensurate with the duration, of eternity. And, if we are not lost to a sense of all that should be most precious to us here and hereafter, it will be the object of our highest, our most ardent, our unceasing ambition, to obtain from the Son of God

that freedom, in possessing which we shall be free indeed.

But this is no reason for underrating the temporal freedom with which it is contrasted. Many are apt to do so. They even go so far as to allege and to maintain that the religion of Christ does neither recognise the importance of liberty, nor condemn and prohibit slavery. And thus our highest authority, in all matters of faith and practice, is quoted by those to whom liberty is a matter of indifference, or whose worldly interest is involved in the continuance of slavery,—to countenance their opinions and justify their conduct. I propose to show that Christianity teaches the very reverse of what is thus alleged. And,

I. In the *first* place, the erroneousness of the opinion may be deduced from the very phraseology of my text, and from the frequent use and application of this phraseology throughout the word of God.

Observe that, when the sacred writers,—when our Saviour himself, would pourtray the spiritual blessings which he has secured for sinners, and the spiritual evils from which he has delivered them, the terms employed with that view are *liberty* and *bondage*; and that these terms are employed, not as words of mere vague and general import, but as intended to convey ideas at once definite and impressive, of the different states which they severally represent. This is plain from the mode in which they are applied, and the circumstances with which they are associated.

Such a meaning, indeed, is necessarily implied in their being used at all. When we wish to depict any thing that is superlatively good, or that is superlatively bad, we are not usually indifferent as to the figures and analogies which we bring forward for that purpose. On the contrary, we take care to select, not only such as have some formal resemblance to the things we propose to illustrate, but such as correspond with them in the kind and degree of those qualities by which they are respectively distinguished, and as are therefore fitted to communicate correct notions to the understanding, and to awaken suitable sentiments in the heart. We exhibit and explain the character of what it is our object to make fully known, by adducing something which is similar to it in its peculiar features or in its essential nature, and in which those to whom we address ourselves, being familiarly acquainted with it, may easily recognise all that, on account of which we have advanced it, and called their attention to it. And if that, with respect to which we are desirous to inform or to affect them, is itself of high importance, and if we wish it to be regarded in the full extent of its value or of its worthlessness, we invariably have recourse to whatsoever is not merely admitted to be worthless or valuable, according as either property may happen to be the one in question, but admitted to be worthless or valuable in no ordinary measure.

Now there can be no doubt that this rule is observed throughout the Bible as well as in all human writings, there being no reason for neglecting in the former what is universally accounted so rational,

and felt to be so natural, in the latter. And indeed many striking and apposite examples, in proof of this, might be quoted, with reference to various topics besides the one which is more immediately before us. For instance, in order to urge upon us the mischiefs involved in *ignorance*, it is compared to thick darkness; and the comparison would not answer the end for which it is made, unless we knew that such darkness, where pitfalls and precipices abound, is fraught with great discomfort, or pregnant with imminent and mortal hazards. And again, *knowledge*, for the purpose of showing its advantages and recommending its acquirements, is compared to the light of the sun; and here also the comparison would not answer the end for which it is made, unless we were sensible that such "light is pleasant to the eyes" which behold it, and necessary to guide us in safety through the difficulties and perils that beset our path, and that would otherwise perplex or overwhelm us.

It is in the same manner, and on the same principle, that personal freedom and personal slavery are resorted to by the inspired penmen, to instruct and to impress our minds correctly and forcibly with what is precious and desirable in the state of salvation, and with what is degrading, repulsive, and ruinous, in the state of sin out of which that salvation emancipates us. To say that the state of sin is a state of slavery, would not have the meaning which it is designed to have, unless that slavery from which the idea is borrowed were a state of real debasement, of acknowledged and experienced wretchedness. And

to say that the state of salvation is a state of freedom, would be just as far away from the import which was meant to be attached to it, unless the freedom to which it is likened, and by which its nature and effects are unfolded, were distinguished by its intrinsic excellence, and by its necessity to our well-being and happiness.

From this it is clear that Scripture considers slavery as a great and essential evil, and liberty as a great and essential good. And the point is still more distinctly made out, when we recollect that the figure made use of by the sacred writers in this case is not a mere *simile*, which is comparatively tame and inexpressive, but a *metaphor*, which gives all emphasis to the truth that it is employed to convey or to enforce. When our Lord spake of the false teachers that were to appear, as hypocritical and devouring, he did not say that they would be *like* wolves in sheep's clothing, but he spake of them as if they had been these very animals themselves: "Behold, there shall arise false prophets, who shall come among you, in sheep's clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves." And when God is spoken of as the sure and permanent refuge of his people, it is not said that he is *like* a rock, or *like* a high tower, or *like* a strong-hold, where they may abide in security; but, in order that this security may be set forth in its highest degree, he is actually called a rock, and a high tower, and a strong-hold, for those who flee to him for protection and safety.

And so is it with the state in which we are by sin, and the state to which we are raised by the

Gospel. The former is not spoken of, as if it had merely some sort of resemblance to bondage; but the resemblance is brought out as close and striking, by its receiving the appellation of bondage; and the latter is not spoken of as if it merely had some sort of resemblance to freedom, but the nearness and accuracy of the resemblance are signified by its receiving the appellation of freedom:—Thus intimating in strong language, not only that bondage and freedom are conditions of life with whose peculiar circumstances mankind are generally conversant, but also that there is an acute perception and an intense feeling of the characteristic properties of each—of the evils of the one and the blessings of the other—and, moreover, rendering that perception still more acute, and that feeling still more intense, by holding up the objects which the terms bondage and freedom were introduced to illustrate, as *infinite* in the several qualities that belonged to them, of worthlessness or of excellence. The argument and the phraseology correspond with each other, and are equally instructive as to the proposition we are endeavouring to sustain. It is this: “You ought,” the sacred writers may be supposed to say,—“you ought to seek after the salvation of the Gospel, for that is *liberty*; and by what you know of the charms, the advantages, and the comforts of liberty, you may form some estimate of the privilege of being spiritually saved. You ought to escape from the guilt and depravity in which you are involved by your apostacy from God, for to remain in it is to remain in *slavery*; and from what you know of the vileness,

and dangers, and horrors of slavery, you may gather some tolerable idea of what it is to be guilty and depraved. And if these representations fail to convince you of the necessity of the change, for effecting which they are produced, and to persuade you to aspire after that change in its requisite extent,—yet, if you will only believe that we regard the change as of vast and incalculable consequence,—that we hold a state of sin to be inconceivably the worst, and a state of salvation to be inconceivably the best state of being in which man can be placed,—if you will only believe this, then you may judge with what esteem we contemplate liberty, and with what abhorrence we look upon slavery, when we adduce these, and all that is implied in them, to elucidate our doctrine, and to enforce our exhortation, as to your spiritual circumstances, and your spiritual conduct.”

I might quote a great many passages from the Bible, exemplifying and corroborating what has now been affirmed—such as those in which we read of the “bondage of corruption,” of the “servants or slaves of sin,” of the “liberty of the sons of God,” of being “led captive by Satan at his will,” of “liberty to the captive,” of “loosing our bonds.” But it is unnecessary to be so particular. For the dictation adverted to is ever and anon presenting itself to our eye, as we travel through the sacred record. And indeed we meet with it so often, and are so accustomed to employ it, that we are apt to understand it literally, to forget that it is originally of a figurative description, and to require some considera-

tion before we recognise its metaphorical character and import. But this only strengthens our assertion when we say, that in this way, those who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" have stigmatised and proscribed slavery, and lauded and consecrated liberty, even more strongly than they could well have done by the most distinct and unequivocal declarations; and that the Spirit of God himself may, therefore, be considered as testifying, that within the sphere of our mortal existence, and as far as our temporal weal is concerned, to be a slave is the basest style and state of man, and that to be a freeman is his highest distinction, and his truest glory.

Were it necessary, I might dwell upon one great and important fact in the annals of the Bible, from which the view that I have been taking derives material support. I refer to the slavery of the Israelites under Pharaoh and his people. And I refer, not merely to the compassion which God manifested for the Israelites as suffering from the capricious cruelties and grievous exactions of their oppressors, nor merely to the judgments which he inflicted on the taskmasters, to whose tyranny they were subjected, nor merely to the extraordinary deliverance which he accomplished for them when the cry of their distress had come up into his ears. I refer not merely to these circumstances, though they might be fairly insisted upon as demonstrations of God's displeasure against those who keep their fellow-creatures in the thralldom of slavery. But I refer to the use made of this passage of sacred history, in rela-

tion to spiritual things. It is alluded to in the Bible as giving a just and affecting view of the bitterness of those calamities of which sin is productive, in the case of such as are under its dominion, and of the happiness of being rescued from these, and carried beyond their influence, and beyond their reach. The bringing of the Israelites by the mighty hand and the outstretched arm of Jehovah, "out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage," is spoken of as an instituted type of that infinitely greater salvation which was afterwards wrought out for them, and for "all the ends of the earth," by the interposition of the same grace and of the same power. And the ordinance of the passover was divinely established to commemorate it as an event of high moment and of grateful recollection, just as the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, coming in place of the passover, was subsequently established to show forth that eternal redemption which Christ secured for the souls of men, and to perpetuate the remembrance of those marvellous means by which it was effected.

And surely when we reflect, that not only are the terms bondage and freedom applied by the pen of inspiration, as fit and expressive signs of that accursed thing *sin*, and of that glorious thing *salvation*; but when a fact such as that which we have quoted, and in which the meaning of these terms is so strikingly realized, is recorded by the finger of God, as significant and emblematical of the sin which his own Son died to expiate, and of the salvation which his own Son died to accomplish in be-

half of our fallen race, we cannot for a moment hesitate to admit that hereby is bondage stamped with the deep and indelible mark of his disapprobation, and freedom proclaimed as that which is the object of his complacent regard, and as that for which his rational offspring are born and destined.

II. In the *second* place, opposition to slavery, and countenance to freedom, are given by the whole spirit, and genius, and tendency, of Christianity.

I do not rest upon any precise statement or precept in which we find our doctrine explicitly and expressly taught. At the same time, were I to enter fully or minutely into the discussion, I could at least show that the contrary doctrine is not to be found in Scripture. In the Old Testament you may see permission granted to practise slavery in particular circumstances; but this took place under a special constitution, was appointed of God in adaptation to certain specific exigencies or occasions; and while it did not devolve, in the form of a right, on any class of people, or on society at large, was in manifest contrariety to the general rule, which required men to love their neighbours as themselves, and was denounced, punished, and put down, where the practice was introduced, as in the case of the Egyptians and Israelites, without the intervention of God's righteous and sovereign authority. And in the New Testament, although no direct prohibition is issued against it, in the terms and with the form of a Divine enactment, yet it is very plainly understood, that the privilege of asserting and enjoying their freedom

was recognised as belonging of right to those who were in a state of slavery; they are only required to waive that privilege, and to continue in their servitude, in order to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," who were apt to allege that the Gospel warranted and encouraged a dissolution of all the bonds of civil obligation on the part of those who embraced it; and thus it became their duty, by the sacrifice of personal ease and comfort, to forward its progress and prosperity in the world.

Such will be found to be the correct view of what is said or decreed on the subject of slavery in the Holy Scriptures. I look not, however, to distinct prohibitions or injunctions on that point. I appeal to something which, if not more palpable in its aspect, is much more significant in its meaning, and much more certain in its effects. I appeal to the inherent and efficacious power of Christianity, as determining all in whom it really dwells, to aspire after liberty as the object of their keen ambition—to cleave to it as the object of their fond and decided attachment. If you introduce the principles and sentiments of Christianity into the heart of any individual, you introduce into his heart the very elements of freedom—you infuse that which he feels to be at eternal variance with every species of bondage—you prepare him for throwing off the yoke, with an energy which may be calm and secret, but which is also potent and irresistible in its operations. Let his faith be strong in the truths of revelation, and let him experience their practical influence, and the consequence is, that, without waiting to compare

what he is with what he ought to be, or calculating on the advantages of exchanging the one situation for the other, he is constrained, as it were, by instinct, to aim at the transition, and to seek for disenthralment from the tyranny that presses him to the earth. The restraints by which he was formerly fettered, and the oppressions to which he formerly submitted, were tolerable to a mind subdued and degraded by its wrongs; but the tone of feeling induced by that knowledge which he has acquired, and by the renewal which has taken place in his moral constitution, is such as no longer to endure what, even in the time of his darkness and debasement, he bewailed or hated as a grievance. He does not engage in a process of reasoning on the subject,—he is not conscious of tracing any particular movements among his affections,—he does not enter into any computation of worldly interests. The impulse that actuates him is a necessary and involuntary result of that revolution which has been effected in his whole nature. There is a something within him which is abhorrent of whatsoever goes to constitute him a slave. His soul has acquired elasticity which makes him impatient of the treatment that has hitherto crushed him into littleness and insignificance, prompts him to cast off, as if by physical action, the pressure of injury, and violence, and scorn, under which he had long and hopelessly groaned, and bids him rise, with the silent and resistless force of nature, to that place in the creation of God, in which alone, as his congenial clime, he can breathe, and live, and be happy.

But while we attribute to Christianity this effi-

cient influence in producing the love and the assertion of liberty, even when those who pay to it that spontaneous tribute are not aware of the mode in which it works upon them, and act as if they were guided by the simple inspiration of divinity, it is by no means difficult to discover and to understand how the views, and susceptibilities, and principles, and hopes, imparted to them by such a religion, should animate them with an invincible abhorrence of slavery, and a determined aspiration after the enjoyment of freedom.

The very first doctrine which revelation impresses on the belief of a Christian, is that of the natural equality of our species, as made of one blood, formed into one family, called to one inheritance. Whether they be viewed as still possessing their original state and destiny, or as fallen from it by sin, or as restored to it by mercy, they are all on a level in the sight of that great Being who is their common Lord, and with whom there neither is nor can be any "respect of persons." A difference may subsist in the degree of personal endowments, in external circumstances, in what may be called the mere accidents of created existence. But in every thing that is essential to them as rational, accountable, immortal creatures, there is no distinction. From the highest to the lowest, from the most learned to the most illiterate, from the strongest to the feeblest, amidst all the varieties which mark them, and all the chances and changes that befall them, still they occupy the same place as God's offspring, and are linked to him by the same ties, and share in the same great destinies

which he awards. His holy image was primarily stamped upon our race—by our race was that image forfeited and lost—and the scheme devised and promulgated for its restoration comprehends our race in its purposes and its arrangements. This the Christian sees to be clearly and emphatically laid down in that character from which all his rights in the capacity of Christian are derived. When, therefore, any of his fellows would make him or would keep him a slave, and thus maintain a property in him as if he were of a different and a meaner order, and on a level with the beasts that perish, he beholds in that an usurpation of the prerogative of God, whose he is as well as they are—a violation of that principle by which, according to God's appointment, every man is the brother of every man, whether in sin or in salvation—a robbery of those original rights which God as Creator, and Redeemer, and Governor of the world, has conferred upon him in common with the very persons who would treat him as the oxen that plough their fields. And beholding such an encroachment on what the book of inspiration has revealed to him as a primary and fundamental truth in which he is individually, and deeply, and necessarily concerned, it is impossible that a holy and a high-wrought indignation should not fill his bosom; and it is impossible that this indignation should not animate him to attempt, with no ordinary zeal, the recovery of that station which God commanded him to hold in his moral universe, and of which a creature like himself has basely, daringly, impiously despoiled him.

Again, suppose the Christian to contemplate habitually, as he must be supposed to do, the death of Christ as endured for his sake, and you cannot fail to perceive that slavery will be insupportable to his predominant feelings. Had he continued an outcast from God's favour, under the condemning sentence of the law, and doomed to everlasting destruction, and had he been sensible of this, or had nothing occurred to give him a contrary impression, oppressive treatment would not have been so foreign to his character and condition, and might not have excited any vehement degree of aversion and resistance. But the case is quite altered when he thinks of the honour which has been put upon him, both by the salvation he has experienced, and by the method which has been employed to secure it. Such value has he possessed in the compassionate regard of God, that God has delivered him from the ruin that he merited, and brought him back into a state of reconciliation, and Divine friendship, and heavenly hope; that for this end he commissioned his own Son to become incarnate, and, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," to suffer and to die upon a cross; that he appoints his Holy Spirit to make over the benefits of Christ's mediation to the object of his love, and "seal him unto the day of redemption;" and that he never ceases to watch over him, and to care for him, till he is safely lodged in the habitations of celestial glory. All this, no doubt, is connected with humility on the part of the Christian, considering how undeserving he is of the dignity to which he has been raised. But still to the greatness of that dignity he cannot be insensi-

ble. And he is neither fully alive to it, nor sufficiently grateful for it, nor acting at all worthy of it, if he does not feel disdainful of the bonds, and stripes, and despotic barbarities, by which wicked men would vilify and degrade what the Lord of all has so miraculously distinguished and exalted. Having received such a testimony to the preciousness of his being, from the great God of heaven and of earth, as is to be found in the institution of the Gospel—seeing that his nature has been consecrated by its union with the divine, in the person of the Redeemer, and by its being made the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost—emancipated in soul and body from guilt and corruption and death—elevated to a place among the sons of God, and constituted an heir of the crown of righteousness and glory which fadeth not away; it would be a renunciation of all natural and of all gracious feeling, were he not to spurn from him the very thought of being bought and sold as a piece of sordid merchandise, and doomed to toil and to suffer, and to prostrate himself at the bidding of a tyrant, who has no sympathy with the costliness of his present privileges, and none with the grandeur of his eternal portion. And though far from cherishing pride, because he has been called by Divine grace to a filial alliance with the great Jehovah, and to the assured expectation of sitting upon that throne, high and lifted up, which the triumphant Saviour now occupies, he is ready to cast all the badges of distinction with which he has been invested, at the feet of him by whom they have been conferred, and in imitation of his example, meekly and humbly to

“condescend to men of low estate,” yet there is a power in the nobleness of his new vocation, and in the loftiness of his regenerated spirit, which lifts him above the drudgery and the baseness of bondage, and forbids him to stoop for a moment to any thing so mean and so despicable as that. Having a divine title to call God his Father, it is the dictate of his inmost heart that he cannot be the slave of man; and he feels that he ought to tread the soil of freedom, because he hopes ere long to tread the soil of immortality.

The same thing may be anticipated from the Christian by considering the perfection of moral principle, and of moral sentiment, to which he has been brought by the religion that he believes. Every species of iniquity assumes a deeper and a darker hue in his eyes than it ever assumed before. Wheresoever it prevails, and by whomsoever it is committed, it meets with his unqualified hatred, and his resolute opposition. And he is not satisfied till he has used every means, and put forth every endeavour for its discouragement or its suppression. This being the case, he cannot but set himself against that injustice and inhumanity which seem to be essential to the nature, or inseparable from the practice of slavery,—that is to say, he cannot but set himself to regain their freedom for those unhappy persons who have been made the victims of that immoral system. And if he recognises it as a duty to perform this achievement in behalf of others, with whom perhaps he is only connected by the common ties of humanity, surely he must also re-

cognise it as a duty to perform it in his own behalf. It is an effort not dictated by selfishness, which Christianity condemns as a vice, but by an enlightened regard to his own welfare, which Christianity enjoins as a virtue; and it is stimulated and enforced by that abhorrence of all sin which Christianity absolutely requires, and uniformly fosters in its real votaries. The violence done to his rights, and the havoc made in his comforts, are not the less criminal and detestable that he feels them to be injurious; nor is he less entitled, or less bound, to aim at the subversion of what is so contrary to the law of God, because that change would be attended with the attainment of relief and happiness. It may be right for the Christian, in certain conjunctures, or in particular circumstances, to submit to the evils of slavery: but, then, this is the grace of patience which he exercises in obedience to the same authority which inculcates hostility to all acts and systems of transgression, and is compatible with a full sense of the enormity of that guilt from which he suffers, and with a heartfelt, and fixed, and decided inclination to resist its doings, and to destroy its existence: just as he should be resigned when visited with poverty, or disease, or any other natural distress, though all the while these are the objects of his aversion, and he is diligently labouring to get them alleviated or removed. His obligation to withstand the progress and to pull down the dominion of all unrighteousness and cruelty, is perpetually present to his mind as flowing directly from the doctrines, and the maxims, and the precepts, and

the examples of the Scripture record; and not only believing, but knowing from experience, that these are characteristic of slavery in its origin, in its continued operations, in its practical effects, Christianity, through the medium of its moral influence, will determine him to pray with all fervour, to plead with all importunity, to contend with all earnestness and perseverance, that he may escape from under its iniquitous domination. And in proportion as his mind is instructed in the divine law, imbued with love for that rectitude and goodness which it enjoins, and pervaded by abhorrence of the wickedness which it prohibits, in the same proportion will he hate the system of bondage by which he is enchained, and in the same proportion will he struggle for its overthrow and its annihilation.

I might carry this illustration to a much greater length; but enough I presume has been said to demonstrate that Christianity, in all the views that can be taken of it, is directly calculated to render those who are truly governed by it inimical to slavery, and studious to be delivered from its burden. And I shall only add, as confirmatory of what we have advanced, this very instructive fact, that such as are interested in retaining their fellow-creatures in the fetters which they have put upon them, do generally deprecate and repel the attempts that are made to let in upon them the light of the gospel, and to make them experimentally acquainted with what God has revealed for their instruction and their guidance. Some of them may not object to their slaves being taught religion, provided it be a

religion of forms—provided it consist in lessons of patience and submission—or provided it be only so much as will avoid the stigma and reproach of religion being altogether excluded. But they will not, because they know that they dare not, allow Christianity to be inculcated in the full import of its truth, and in the strict obligation of its laws, and in the unbending nobleness of its spirit. And, in general, they manifest an unconquerable reluctance to tolerate those ministers of Christ who would faithfully inform the understanding, and touch the conscience, and direct the conduct, of that abject population whom they are resolved to keep in subjection to their capricious sway, and in subserviency to their worldly gains. If left to themselves, and not forced or shamed into partial compliances with what is nothing but decent in Christian professors, and with what, in case of refusal, might be followed by more serious requisitions, they would not permit one of their enslaved dependants to learn anything of that message of mercy and salvation which bespeaks him from whom it proceeds to be the friend, and the patron, and the protector of liberty. And from the language which they openly hold, and the restrictions which they actually impose, they plainly acknowledge that Christianity and freedom are indissolubly linked—that the revealed doctrine of God is utterly hostile to their arbitrary domination over man—that if the torch of sacred truth once shines upon the path of those who now crouch under their sway, and tremble at their frown, that becomes a path in which they will soon begin the march of

emancipation, and by which they will assuredly and speedily regain the birth-right of independence, which has been so unjustly taken away from them.

III. In the *third* and last place, Christianity leads those by whom it is believed, and loved, and practised, to make every effort for asserting their personal freedom, because they feel that slavery is most unfavourable to its cultivation and its progress.

A man that is seriously concerned about remaining steadfast and making improvement in his Christian vocation, cannot be indifferent to those outward circumstances in which he may happen to be situated, seeing it is the dictate of sacred Scripture, and the lesson of common observation and experience, that on the nature of these circumstances a great deal of his religious comfort and prosperity will depend. Aware that certain influences tend to do him serious mischief in that respect, and that certain influences tend to establish his principles, and to promote his advancement in the good way of the Lord, he is careful, as far as possible, to escape from the former and to surround himself with the latter. And he will pursue this conduct in proportion as he estimates the worth of spiritual freedom, and desires to grow in godliness and in grace. But as a state of slavery is, in all its circumstances, diametrically opposed and singularly inauspicious to his steadfastness in the faith, and to his fidelity in obedience of the gospel, the power of Christianity must operate both upon his sense of duty and his sense of interest, to prevent him from continuing passively and content-

edly in that state, and to ripen his earnest desires into active endeavours for deliverance from its moral disadvantages.

Now that a state of slavery is such, in this view, as we have represented it, no one can venture to deny who knows any thing accurately of its leading features, and its ordinary or necessary accompaniments.

This is sufficiently demonstrated by the broad fact, that those who are interested in keeping others in bondage, usually maintain their interest by also keeping them in ignorance of true religion, which so obviously proscribes the relation between master and slave, as unjust, inhuman, and oppressive. For a system which requires for its stability and its permanence, that a particular class of men should be destitute of the knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation, or that they should acquire as little of it as can possibly be imparted, goes directly to arrest or to retard the progress of religion among that class, by depriving them of the main and primary instrument by which it is to be rooted in them, and nourished, and made to bring forth fruit in abundance. If the way of life is not shown to them, they cannot walk in it; or if they are only allowed to get occasional and imperfect glimpses of its course, they cannot walk in it securely, and steadily, and successfully; they cannot avoid its dangers—they cannot surmount its difficulties—they cannot reach with certainty its proper and blessed termination. And this will be felt by every individual who in spite of the barriers placed between him and divine

truth, has yet, through some extraordinary interposition, been made savingly acquainted with it, and it will be felt by him as a grievance for which there is no adequate remedy in any of the peculiarities of his condition. Nay, if shame or necessity on the part of those whose immunities are to be upheld by shutting out the light, should provide sacred instruction, it is hardly conceivable that the persons who are allowed or appointed to administer it, should have the privilege of declaring freely and unreservedly "the whole counsel of God." There are certain articles of faith—certain points of moral obligation—certain declarations of the Divine will, which they must either totally suppress, or unfairly exhibit, or so coldly urge as to divest them of all their meaning and efficiency. They cannot be entrusted with the full and unequivocal discharge of their functions as the messengers of heaven. And hence the reluctance with which their ministrations are accepted, and the jealousy with which they are watched, and the resentment with which they are treated, if they have been so zealous as to publish or to inculcate those maxims of Scripture which bring into question, however remotely, the lawfulness or the blessings of slavery: and hence the peculiar favour that is conferred upon the men who, pretending to communicate the revelation of God as he has given it, wrap it all up in outward and useless ceremonies, which only foster superstition in the minds of those whom they are employed to awe and to delude—or preach non-resistance to the most cruel and most arbitrary exactions, and uncomplaining pa-

tience under wrongs that are atrocious and multiplied beyond enduring, as the first and most essential duty of a Christian—or so trim, and mutilate, and misrepresent the doctrines of the Bible as to convert that volume, which was intended to secure the rights of all men upon earth, as well as to prepare them for the happiness of heaven, into an authority for sustaining the usurped prerogatives of the tyrant, and for perpetuating the degradation and the misery of his slaves.

Wherefore, if it be in the nature or in the history of the case, that either religious knowledge is to be wholly withheld, or that it is to be but partially and deceitfully conveyed, it is plain that Christianity cannot thrive at all, or that it cannot thrive as it ought to do, among those who are in a state of bondage. And from this it follows not only that all of us, to whom Christianity is dear, and who are actuated by the compassion which it breathes, will do our utmost to put a final period to that mighty evil, but that those who, placed in subjection to it, have nevertheless, through some peculiar vouchsafement of Providence, learned experimentally the value of the Gospel, must feel themselves disposed to mutiny against a despotism which would forbid them to become more familiar with what is so precious to them as the servants of God, and the expectants of a heavenly recompense, and to adopt every method which they can use consistently with their deference for the Divine will; for emerging into a situation where they may, unchallenged and unrestricted, set themselves to know more and more of the grace, and

the truth and the will, of that Saviour who has "made them free indeed."

Need I, my friends, for the purpose of confirming our argument,—need I remind you of the manifold disadvantages, besides the radical and incurable one now adverted to, under which the victims of slavery labour as to their religious and moral well-being? If they know and prize Christianity, it is enough to make them break the unhallowed chains by which they are bound, that these are chains also of spiritual ignorance, fastened and tightened upon them the more, that they may not reach the fountain of truth and knowledge, and drink of it freely for the life and the refreshment of their souls. But, independently of this, need I remind you, that they are prohibited, when their own experienced need requires it, from engaging in those exercises and pursuits by which their piety may be warmed, their affections purified, their comfort enhanced? Need I remind you, that where filthy lucre is the moving spring which guide and influences those whom they must obey, there will be remorselessly wrung from them the toil of every hour that can be spared from necessary rest; and that the Sabbath, which, to all the free disciples of Christ, is a day of instruction, and repose, and prayer, and consolation, will bring with it to them no such blessings and no such enjoyments? Need I remind you how apt they are, from the combined force of temptation and authority, to become a prey to the brutal passions and appetites of the worldlings that recognise in them nothing higher than the devoted instruments of their pleasure or their gain?

Need I remind you of the tendency of all the iniquitous commands, of all the relentless inflictions, of all the capricious tyrannies, to which they must submit from those who claim in them the right of property, to counteract the play of generous affection, to harden their hearts against the influence of moral sentiment, and to make them the very opposite of that to which the Gospel, if undisturbed and unthwarted in its operations, is calculated to mould their feelings and their character? Need I remind you, in short, of the native effect of slavery to paralyse the noblest faculties, and deaden the best sensibilities of all who are subjected to its malignant power, to reduce them in their desires, and in their habits, to that mere animal level from which the Gospel was intended to raise them, and to render even the means of improvement which may have fallen into their lot, scanty and inadequate as they generally are, altogether inefficient for attaining the end which they were divinely instituted to subserve? I need not remind you of these things, which are the conclusions of reason,—the lessons of experience—the enunciations of fact. And I need not add, that, in this view also, Christianity lifts its voice decidedly and practically against the abominations of slavery, and against the doctrine of its apologists and defenders; and that as surely as we consider the interests of personal religion to be of paramount importance, and its cultivation to be of indispensable necessity, so surely will we protest and contend against a system so hostile to it in all its aspects and in all its bearings, and so surely will every slave who has em-

braced the faith, and imbibed the spirit, and tasted the comforts, of the Gospel, feeling the jeopardy in which he stands, and the disadvantages that press upon him, in consequence of the enmity that subsists between his bondage and his Christianity, regard himself as warranted and called upon to pant after deliverance from the thralldom in which his soul does not and cannot prosper, and after the liberty under whose vigorous and kindly guardianship alone it is that, by God's blessing, those can grow up to the maturity of moral excellence, whom Christ has plucked out of the spoiler's hand, and invested with the freedom of the sons of God.

Thus have I attempted to make good the proposition with which I set out. And if I have succeeded in the attempt, I cannot but congratulate you, and I do for myself feel it refreshing, that we have rescued liberty from the libel that has been virtually directed against it, and deprived slavery of the vindication that has been pleaded for it, under the great and venerable sanction of Christianity. Shame! that any should have been found to speak lightly of liberty whose worth is so testified—whose benefits are so numerous and so rich. Moralists have praised it—poets have sung it—the gospel has taught and breathed it—patriots and martyrs have died for it. As a temporal blessing, it is beyond all comparison and above all price. It is the air we breathe—the food we eat—the raiment that clothes us—the sun that enlightens and vivifies, and gladdens all on whom it shines. Without

it what are honours and riches, and all similar endowments? They are the trappings of a hearse—they are the garnishings of a sepulchre. And with it, the crust of bread, and the cup of water, and the lowly hovel, and the barren rock, are luxuries which it teaches and enables us to rejoice in. He who knows what liberty is, and can be glad and happy when placed under a tyrant's rule, and at the disposal of a tyrant's caprice, is like the man who can laugh and be in merry mood at the grave, where he has just deposited all that should have been loveliest in his eye, and all that should have been dearest to his heart. Shame on those who have so far taxed their ingenuity, and so far consulted their selfishness, and so far forgotten their Christian name, as to apologise for the existence of slavery, by extolling the incomparable superiority of spiritual freedom, and dragging in the aid and the countenance of Scripture, misstated or misunderstood! For what is slavery, and what does it do? It darkens and degrades the intellect—it paralyses the hand of industry—it is the nourisher of agonising fears and of sullen revenge—it crushes the spirit of the bold—it belies the doctrines, it contradicts the precepts, it resists the power, it sets at defiance the sanctions of religion—it is the tempter, and the murderer, and the tomb of virtue, and either blasts the felicity of those over whom it domineers, or forces them to seek for relief from their sorrows in the gratifications, and the mirth and the madness, of the passing hour.

And slavery being thus so destructive of all that

is good, and so fruitful of all that is evil, may we not be allowed to speak, as it becomes the subject, of that oppressed, and degraded, and unhappy portion of our fallen race, which constitutes the black population of our West India Islands? Imagine not that this is a trifling or illegitimate application of our doctrine; for were it applied to even one human being, unconnected with us by any special bond, the charity of the gospel would justify it; but it is applied to eight hundred thousand human beings connected with us by many ties, which neither justice nor humanity, neither religion nor policy, neither reciprocal obligation nor community of interests, will permit us to disregard.

O my friends, it is difficult to restrain our indignation, when we think of so many of our fellow-men, who were created after the image of that God who created us, who are as much concerned in the costly expiation of Christ as we are, and whose destinies stretch into an eternity of existence as well as ours, loaded with cruel and ignominious chains, and bought and sold, and treated "like the beasts that perish." And when I look abroad to that land of despots and of slaves, and think of all the prostration of intellect, and all the debasement of the immortal spirit, and all the tears, and groans, and agonies, which it must comprehend within its narrow limits, I cannot but recollect, at the same time, with shame and sorrow, that this system of guilt and misery exists, and is deliberately allowed to exist, under the sanction of those who feel what freedom is, and would die for it—who have received

the gospel of mercy, and bless God for it—who prize the welfare of humanity, and boast of the sacrifices they would make for it. And amidst the contemplation of so much injustice on the part of those to whom the Almighty has been kindest, and so much unmerited suffering on the part of those to whom he has been most sparing of his benefits, methinks I see the face of an offended God frowning on our guilty land, as he lends his ear to the cries which ascend to him from that “house of bondage,” which we have helped to fill with cruelty and with crime. And if there be holiness in his character, and honour in his government of the world—of which it would be impiety to doubt—then unless we repent, and evince our penitence, not by empty professions and by partial amendments, but by “undoing the heavy burden,” “breaking every yoke,” and “letting the oppressed go free,” there must be a coming vengeance, which will dash in pieces our unrighteous dominion, and lay all our glory in the dust. “Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” “Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thy hand; forget not the humble.” “Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man; seek out his wickedness till thou find none,”—“that the man of the earth may no more oppress.”

Brethren, when mourning over the desolations of slavery, and fearful of that wrath which these must have provoked against us, it is in some measure refreshing to see what is done by good men in order to mitigate the calamities which it is not yet, it seems, thought expedient to remove,—if indeed the

attempted mitigation of these calamities, instead of leading on to their final removal, do not furnish a pretext for their continuance, diminish the general abhorrence of that system from which they spring, and fix them down for ever on their hapless and unpitied victims.* And surely it becomes us to co-operate with those who are engaged in such a work of benevolence, and to do our part with all energy, and with all boldness, in hastening it on to its ultimate accomplishment. Our duty in this case—as men, as Christians, as friends of human liberty, as patriots and philanthropists—our duty in this case is plain and urgent. It is to lift up our testimony against that which is so atrocious in its character, and so calamitous in its results, and to lend our liberal, and our energetic, and our united aid for pulling down such an edifice of injustice and oppression to the very ground. And it is, moreover, to send Christ's offer of spiritual emancipation to those who are still under its galling bondage—to prevail upon them to receive him as the Saviour of their souls—to train them as far as may be to the holiness which his Spirit is vouchsafed to work in them—so that, weighed down though they be with the burden of a detested and a detestable servitude, their minds may be disenthralled, that they may enjoy “the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free,” that they may be cheered amidst their sorrows and their trials with the belief of a presiding Divinity, who will “make all things work together for their good”—that they may be animated with hope

* See Note.

when they lie down in that place where "the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest," and that they may be prepared for traversing the scene, and mingling in the glories and the blessedness of that immortality, amidst whose hallelujahs to Him who redeemed them, their wrongs, and their captivity, and their sufferings, shall neither be felt nor remembered any more.

NOTE.

I have no hesitation in professing myself an advocate for the immediate emancipation of slaves.

In maintaining the propriety and justice of such a measure, I will not enter the lists with men who, professing to be more enlightened than their fellows on all points of theology, and dogmatising with more than the confidence of Apostles, can bravely defend slavery as a right thing—not to be condemned and abolished—but rather to be tolerated, countenanced, continued—merely because they are pleased to call it a type of the subjection which is due to Christ from his people, and as a great ordinance of God for preaching that subjection to the church. I will not argue with men, however eloquent and however good, who will palm upon me such an absurd and unscriptural *dictum*, and because I refuse to take it as gospel, on authority no better than human, will denounce me as one of those who are "in a state of profound ignorance and rebellious feeling." I will not argue with men who can gravely and dictatorially speak of a slaveholder as "the standing type over all the world of Christ, the Lord both of the election and the reprobation," and of the poor slaves as standing types over all the world of the reprobation, while those who serve the same master but are free, are standing types of the election. I will not, I can-

not argue with men who can indulge in such raving, and not only demand a hearing for it as if it were sober sense, but insist upon our unreserved adoption of it, under the penalty of being utterly unacquainted with the Bible, and guilty of joining in insurrection against God. Rather than argue with such men, I would encounter the most bigotted slave-driver in the West Indies, who founds not his creed upon his own infallible interpretation of the infallible oracles of Divine mercy, but upon views which faith in these oracles may at once and altogether subvert, or which may undergo a beneficial change by deeper consideration and more lengthened experience. With neither class, however, would I be very willing to engage in dispute, seeing that with neither would it be easy to agree on any common ground where we might stand and reason, or, rather, seeing that they and I differ *toto cælo* as to the essential nature and demerit of slavery. I am to be understood as proceeding on the principle contended for in the discourse to which this note is affixed, viz. that slavery is condemned by religion, or, in other words, is immoral, and upon that principle I plead for the immediate and total abolition of slavery.

This doctrine may be successfully maintained even on the grounds of expediency. If a fair balance were struck between the evils of instantly putting an end to the system, and the evils of its continuance till the slaves are prepared for the safe and useful enjoyment of liberty, I have no doubt that the latter would greatly preponderate. The idleness, the anarchy, the outrages on person and property which, as it is alleged, would necessarily accompany a sudden restoration to freedom, could not long continue, and would have a tendency to work their own remedy: and what are these, when compared to the multiplied hardships, insults, oppressions, and sufferings which so many human beings must be doomed to undergo, on the other supposition, for an indefin-

ite period of time—necessarily by the confession of our opponents, for many, many years, and, so far as I am able to judge of their mode of reasoning, for centuries to come, or for ever? The idea of insurrection is very horrible, and operates powerfully on the imagination; but to a mind that reflects calmly, and meditates deeply on the subject, it is not half so distressing as the idea of all the misery that the poor unprotected and unpitied victims of a cruel bondage must endure in silence, or be obliged to suffer with wanton aggravations if they shall dare to resist or to complain—a misery too, of which those on whom it is inflicted can foresee no end but death, and which must even descend from generation to generation. In the one case there is the hurricane, which produces many wrecks and much desolation, but which is soon over, and, having purified the air from sickly vapours, as a compensation for its mischiefs, is succeeded by renovated health, and vigorous effort, and renewed prosperity. In the other case, there is the pestilential atmosphere, which, with its tranquil but not less destructive influence, spreads languishing and disease and death throughout all the habitations of the land, which enfeebles the arm of industry, and interdicts the comforts of life, which diffuses a curse that no skill can avert and no benevolence mitigate, and which the stillness that attends it only renders the more deadly in its effects, and the more permanent in its duration.

If it be true, as the advocates for gradual abolition affirm, that the slaves are not prepared for the freedom to which it is proposed ultimately to restore them, this furnishes an argument much stronger on our side of the question than on theirs. For to what is the alleged want of preparation to be ascribed? Either to the treatment which the slaves have actually received, or to the nature of the system itself under which they have been placed. On the former supposition, the masters are represented as so regardless of what is due to the moral cultivation of their slaves, so guilty of a course of oppression towards them, so little careful to

gain their respect and esteem, that the slaves would refuse to work for their own maintenance, or they would gratify their passions by violence and plunder. According to the accounts given of these masters, they are with few exceptions, of the very best description, and not in the least behind the wisest and humanest of the same class in our own country. And yet they have continued to keep their slaves in this state of ignorance, and barbarism, and unfitness for liberty, when they could not fail to be sensible that it was the great cause of preventing the measure of emancipation from being carried, and when it constituted the principal argument which was employed against it by themselves and their friends! Surely to wait till persons who have hitherto been so negligent of what was their obvious duty, and who are clearly interested in never performing that duty effectually, shall train their slaves for the complete liberation which they are said to be unqualified to enjoy, is to manifest a degree of simplicity which every man of common understanding would blush to own. The masters have never yet been persuaded—and they cannot be compelled—to prepare their slaves for freedom; yet it is under their management that this preparation must be effected; and therefore, the case may be fairly considered as hopeless. On the other supposition, the conclusion is still stronger and more indisputable. If the system has wrought such degradation in the principles, and feelings, and character of those who have been subjected to it, that they cannot be trusted with the exercise of liberty; and if it has produced this effect upon them in spite of the boasted humanity, and in spite of the interested motives, by which we have been told all such evils are necessarily prevented, whence arises the expectation, that at any future period it will have different influence and an opposite result? The unfitness for emancipation originating in the very nature and operation of slavery, it is a contradiction and absurdity to say that the slavery and the unfitness can ever be disjoined. It is an ir-

resistible inference from such a proposition, that a slave can never be qualified for the deliverance which is desiderated, and therefore that he never can be made free.

I do not deny, however, that the system of slavery, which exists in our West India colonies, may be amended—that many of its harsher features may be softened down—that some of its more detestable accompaniments may be removed—and that altogether it may be made to assume a milder and less revolting aspect. But from this I cannot help anticipating more evil than good. Whenever such an amelioration is accomplished, that argument which affects nine-tenths of your men of benevolence and expediency is incalculably weakened; the most formidable objections to what we are desirous to abolish are nearly removed; and the country ceases to feel any deep concern in the cause which has long excited their keenest sympathies, and still calls forth their liveliest indignation. And the moment that the community at large grow passive or lukewarm on the subject, the process of gradual abolition that was going on stops; the friends of slavery are not asked to make any farther concession, or they meet the demand for them, with an exhibition of the improvements that have been made, and of the happiness that reigns; the inherent virulence of the system still works with power, though in secret; the best regulations are evaded; abuses and corruptions spring up where they were thought to have been eradicated; the law by degrees becomes a dead letter; avarice, and passion, and lust, and cruelty regain their former ascendancy; and it requires a new and a mightier effort to rouse either the legislature or the people to reconsider a subject which had been thrust upon their attention, till they were almost sick of it, and to re-enact the statutes and impose the restraints which had promised so much, and effected so little, in behalf of the oppressed negroes.

In this view I have always lamented the tone of satisfaction with which any legislative measure was hailed, as con-

tributing to the protection or comfort of the slaves. Every step of this kind has appeared to me a retrogressive movement. Each successive boon, as it is insultingly called, which has been conferred on the enslaved Africans, has only served to put off the consummation of our wishes to a more distant period. The principle of expediency, in this case, seems to defeat itself. And all that it suggests for attaining the end in view, goes to make that attainment more distant and more hopeless—a better illustration of which need not be sought for, than what is actually found in the recent history of the question—the partial enactments for amendment in the system being for the most part resisted and thwarted by the very men, who must necessarily have the greatest share in preparing for the ultimate abolition of it, and having very little other effect than that of providing an argument for its perpetuity, by giving some colour to the allegation that things are so much more tolerable than they once were, as not to justify any violent outcry, or any serious alarm, among the friends of humanity.

But instead of enlarging farther on the ground of expediency as supporting immediate abolition, I would found my pleading for that measure on the principles of moral justice, or religious obligation. I do not contend with those who maintain that slavery is not a violation of these principles. But on those who acknowledge that it is, I would urge the inconsistency of their conduct in still ranking themselves along with the gradual abolitionists, and I cannot but express my surprise that so many of them should fall into this inconsistency. I address myself to those who profess to be Christians, and to take their maxims and rules of conduct from the Bible, and I ask them whether they believe that slavery implies *sin* on the part of those who impose it on their fellow-creatures? If they answer in the negative, I say again, that with such I am not at present expostulating or reasoning. But if they answer in the affirmative, and allow that moral guilt attaches to the system of slavery, then I would

have them to explain the grounds on which they would justify perseverance in that system, or defend themselves for giving it their countenance and support ? Were we consulting about the propriety of terminating any commercial or political arrangement, there might be doubts entertained as to the thing itself being attempted at all, or as to the best period for accomplishing it ; fact might be set against fact, and argument against argument, and such calculations might be employed on either side as had no reference to the Bible or the Decalogue, and the whole matter might be settled the one way or the other without sacrificing a single precept of the Divine law. The moment, however, that a transgression of the Divine law, or, in one word, sin, is confessed to characterize any action, whether it be the action of individuals or of nations, that moment all worldly or secular reasoning is precluded ; no question of pecuniary loss or gain is admissible ; a slow or reluctant abandonment of what God forbids is nothing better than continued rebellion against him ; and the only course for a good and pious mind to pursue is an instant, and total, and uncompromising renunciation of the practice or the deed, with whatever inconveniences and with whatever losses the renunciation may be attended.

This is the rule of Scripture ; and applying this rule to the subject under consideration, I think myself entitled to say, that when men allow that slavery is essentially sinful, and yet maintain that it should be abolished by degrees, they are guilty of something which is very like a contradiction in terms. For if it be of the essence of sin, that it is contrary to God's sovereign will, and that it should be abstained from or forsaken just because it is so, then to persist in it deliberately, whether with the view of ultimately deserting it or not, is tantamount to saying that there is no objection to it, or it is a practical denial of the very statement upon which the resolution to desert sin was taken. Slavery is not sinful to-day, and lawful or virtuous to-morrow. It is intrinsically, and thoroughly, and for ever sinful,—it is so, unless God, the

arbiter of man's life, and of his freedom, and of his all, has specially appointed and sanctioned it. And, therefore, to go on indulging in it, under any pretext whatever, is nothing less than to set up our own views in opposition to the authority of the great Governor of the universe.

To what purpose is it to say, or what worth or truth is there in the plea, that an instantaneous conclusion to the slave system would be productive of many serious and extensive mischiefs? Has God any where said that the fear of these will confer on us a right to violate his law? Or does he permit us to put sin into the one scale and advantage into the other, and to decide, in the character of his accountable creatures, according as either preponderates? Is there any rule by which we can compare the one thing with the other? Can disobedience to God be legalised by the gain of the whole world? Or does not Christianity breathe throughout its whole system the spirit of the heathen maxim, which stands as a reproach against many a professing Christian, "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*"? If hurtful effects on the one hand, or beneficial effects on the other, are to regulate our judgments in cases of this kind, then I might argue from that very thing against the mode of judging which the gradual emancipationists have perpetual recourse to. For if it holds good as to slavery, acknowledged to be immoral, it will hold good as to every other species of immorality, and will thus put every commandment of God's law at the mercy of corrupt affection, and arithmetical calculation, and political economy, and substitute secular interest in the room of moral obligation, as the arbiter and judge of human conduct.

But I reject such a mode of settling the question altogether. I confine myself entirely to the path pointed out by the statutes of Heaven; and if I am satisfied that these forbid slavery, I conclude, without any reference to the detriment that may be sustained, or to the profit that may be secured, that slavery must be put an end to, and for the very

same substantial and imperative reason, that it must be put an end to without delay,—every day's procrastination only adding to the guilt of those who indulge in it, and setting at defiance the very first principles and maxims on which a true Christian feels himself constrained to act.

In reply to all this, I may be asked, if I consider every man who keeps his fellow-men in slavery unworthy of the name of Christian? I answer, No. I give this answer, however, only because I charitably presume that those who give other proofs of their Christianity are not yet enlightened so far as to embrace the views which I am enforcing: that they are influenced by prejudice, by ignorance, or by some other unhappy bias, and that they cannot be expected to walk under the government of convictions which have not yet got a footing in their minds. On the supposition that they have a distinct perception of the sinfulness of slavery, independently of its effects or of its accompaniments, I cannot see for my part how they can hold slave-property as they hold other property, or how they can sell slaves on any condition, or how they can buy slaves except for the purpose of redeeming them from bondage. With the doctrine that I entertain on this topic, I could no more do these things, and keep a good conscience, than I could commit any act whatever which I believe to be forbidden by the Divine authority. And I have no doubt, that if the Christian proprietors of slaves would examine the subject purely and disinterestedly, as in the sight of God, and as tried by his law, they would look upon all the worldly gains which such property secures for them as nothing better than the wages of iniquity, and as loaded with a curse which all the protection of the British Legislature can neither lighten nor remove. And I have as little doubt, that if they could be brought to sacrifice their filthy lucre to the cause of truth, justice, and mercy; and if the Christians of this empire could be brought to join them by adopting the moral view of the question, and maintaining it without any deference to the claims of mere utility or ex-

pediency, we should soon witness the annihilation of that great evil, whose existence so many affect to deplore, as most unchristian and immoral, but which so many are willing to suffer for an indefinite period, all immoral and all unchristian as it is.

Let it not be said that I am indifferent to the consequences of immediate emancipation. I am indeed indifferent to them—I despise them wholly, as put into competition with the demands which are made by outraged humanity, for justice and disenthralment. If that be the state of the question, I have no hesitation in saying, let moral rectitude triumph—let God's will be done—let man be free,—even though all our colonies should be the price of such a consummation. And let those who, by their cupidity, their cruelty, and their obstinacy, have made the price so high, bear all the guilt, and all the ignominy of it. But I see no necessity for bringing the matter of dispute to this crisis. Those who hold the opinions which I advocate, are not indifferent to the consequences of the measure proposed. Were we so, we should fall into the same error, and deserve the same condemnation, that we deem attachable to our opponents. We grant, that Parliament must anticipate as accurately as possible, and make as ample provision as possible against the evils, both natural and moral, which may result from immediate abolition. Let the same act which pronounces the negroes free, at least pledge the Legislature, and even proceed so far, to secure the well-being of the slaves, the safety of the masters, the interest of all concerned. I see no objection to entertain the question of compensation; though I must claim the benefits of it in the first place, and above all, to the poor slaves who have suffered wrongs which all the treasures of the empire cannot repair, and protest against the extravagant demands that are made in behalf of the proprietors, and made evidently with the view of demonstrating the measure to be impracticable, and inducing us to give an indefinite prolongation, or, which is the same thing, absolute perpetuity

to the system which we seek to destroy. It appears to me that all this is satisfactorily settled by taking the moral view of the subject—by taking it strictly and firmly—and by giving it an ascendancy over all the proceedings which from first to last may be adopted. If we can agree at once, and on the lofty principle of right and justice, to deliver the slaves from their bondage, there is in this very thing a security for acting rightly and justly in all the subordinate details and subsequent arrangements; whereas if we allow the primary question, that of the slave's title to be emancipated, to be reduced to a question of pure profit and loss, and to be mixed up with the categories of when and how, we surrender the vantage ground on which we stood as Christians, and give to mammon that domination over truth and equity, which has been the great upholder of slavery from its very commencement down to the present hour.

Had my limits permitted me, I should have liked to glance at the proposal for abolishing slavery, by declaring that all who are born of slaves after a certain fixed period shall be accounted free—a proposal which makes a compromise between moral rectitude and mere expediency, for if it be right to make slaves of the innocent parents, it cannot be wrong to make slaves of their not more innocent offspring,—a proposal which interferes with slave property as directly as the proposal for individual emancipation does, it being obvious, that according to all acknowledged principle in such cases, the progeny of slaves are as much property as the slaves themselves, and the value of slaves depending much on their having or being likely to have children—a proposal, moreover, which contradicts one main reason for having emancipation gradual, since if the system of slavery is to continue with respect to the father and mother, by whom is it that the younger are to be trained up, so as to be prepared for the safe and full enjoyment of liberty?

But I must not enlarge. I would conclude with observing, that I am far from laying the whole guilt of our slave

system at the door of our West India planters and proprietors. They have their share, and a large share it is. But they have peculiar temptations to lead them astray: they have been accustomed to associate the continuance of slavery with the preservation of their worldly fortunes; and they may have a feeling of pride or of honour in resisting whatever would give countenance to the allegations of cruelty and oppression which have been, I doubt not in some cases unjustly, brought against them as reasons for depriving them of a power which they have so abused. But no such apologies can be found for the Legislature of Great Britain, which has the enactment of that code of laws of which Christianity is said to be "part and parcel." Still less can such apologies be pleaded for those religious men in our country, who declaim continually against the influence of worldly considerations over human conduct, who form societies and apply for acts of Parliament to put down delinquencies which disappear when placed beside the atrocities of the slave system, and who even go so far as to condemn the application of expediency to Christian practice in every department of life, as sinful and injurious in the extreme. And what a melancholy and instructive fact is it, that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, incorporated by Royal Charter, and consisting entirely of members of the Established Church of England, have possessed slave property for more than a century, and yet that their slaves, by their own acknowledgment, have not been so educated and disciplined as to be fit for the enjoyment of liberty, that every negro child born on their estates is retained in bondage as much as were their imported negroes a hundred years ago, and that their system of management is marked by some of the very worst of those oppressions which prevail among those other proprietors to whom the *Propagation of the Gospel* is an object of hatred or of indifference, and which seem to be essentially characteristic of the slave system by whomsoever it is upheld and practised.

I do not wonder, however, at such inconsistencies in the opinions and doings of the professed Christians on this great question, when I recollect the self-gratulations which they poured forth on the abolition of the slave-trade, which were just as proper and seasonable as those might be that came from a band of robbers who had consented at length to become honest men. Alas! they should rather have been clothed with humility and mourning, for having so long delayed to rescue the unoffending Africans from the mightiest evil that ever afflicted and disgraced humanity.

SPEECHES.

OCTOBER 8, 1830.

At a general meeting of the Edinburgh Association for the Abolition of Negro Slavery,—the Lord Provost in the chair,—the Dean of Faculty having moved a series of Resolutions regarding the gradual emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies, seconded by the Rev. Dr John Ritchie,

Dr Thomson could not allow the resolutions to pass without stating that he did not agree with them as to the period at which emancipation should be obtained. So far as these resolutions go, they are excellent, and I will give every credit to the Committee who has drawn them up; but in my opinion they do not go far enough. They say slavery should be abolished:—When was this doubted by any Christian assembly? If the meeting adhered to what was stated, it was not one step farther advanced than it was several years ago. It proposed that this should be done at the earliest possible or practicable period; but what did that mean? It just means that the practicable period is likely to be many years hence. Now, in my opinion, I would go a step farther, and insert the word “immediately.”

I am astonished that any one can acquiesce in the premises laid down, or in the soundness of the arguments we have heard, without seeing the necessity of immediate abolition. With respect to the West India proprietors, it was a history full of professions, deceptions, and deceitful promises. Was it not a consummation devoutly to be wished for—the deliverance of 800,000 human beings? Why were the eternal principles of justice and equity to be compromised for maxims of expediency or policy? Dr Thomson here referred to the argument of the Dean of Faculty as to the condition of the slave population. The planters say the slaves are as happy as the peasantry of this country. I will take them at their word, said he; and be it so. If that be the case, where is the danger of leaving them to themselves? Where is the risk of their revenging injuries, if they have never suffered wrongs? Instead of cutting each other's throats, the argument cuts its own throat. The truth is, that it is the most absurd argument ever brought forward; and though no friend to the shedding of blood, I would rather that a great deal of blood was shed, if necessary, than that 800,000 human beings should continue in hopeless bondage. (Hear, hear.) I may be told that the slaves are not prepared to receive freedom—but whose fault is that? Have not the planters known for years that it was the feeling of the people, and the intention of the Legislature, to give emancipation? and why are they not prepared? Just because some expect and wish that they never will be prepared. The resolutions contain one proposition to which I

cannot accede,—the proposal that at a certain period, say the 1st of January 1831, it shall be enacted, that all the children born after that period shall be free. This, I maintain, is an utter delusion. It is the approval of the principle that man has a right of property in his fellow-man,—a principle which I never can admit. Then, what is to be the state of those children born after the 1st of January 1831, who are to be declared free, while their brothers and sisters are to be kept in a state of bondage—(cheers)—because they happened to be born, by the Providence of God, before the 31st of December 1830? They are not to be declared free because they are born one hour earlier than their more fortunate brother or sister. Then again, think of the feelings of the parents of those children,—they are slaves, subject to the lash of the cart-whip, and that too before the eyes of their free children (hear, hear, and cheering.) Again, who is to train up those children—or are they to be separated from their parents? Are the ties which exist between parent and child to be broken, or are the latter to be brought under all the feelings and influences of slavery? If so, though free, they will be vicious as slaves. The Rev. Doctor then stated that it was the imperious duty of the meeting to come forward and tell the Legislature, as became a free and enlightened Christian people, who can judge in a case of this kind as well as any Legislature on the face of the earth, what they wanted, and what they were determined to have; and expressed a strong wish that the word “immediate” should be embodied in

the resolutions. Loud cheering, and crying of "Move, move." Seconded by Mr H. Dickie.

On Dr Thomson's motion it was agreed that the meeting should re-assemble, in the same place, at the same hour, on Thursday next, on the principle of petitioning for the immediate abolition of slavery.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE MEETING OF THE
EDINBURGH ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

MR CHAIRMAN*—LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—I beg leave to submit to this meeting a petition which has been prepared by the Committee of the Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society, with the view of its being laid before both Houses of Parliament, founded on the resolutions just now agreed to, for the purpose of asking the Legislature to grant what we consider to be absolutely necessary in the present circumstances of the slavery question; and I begin with reading the petition, as it may be the means of removing certain misconceptions which have been entertained, and counteracting certain misrepresentations which have been industriously circulated, respecting the principles that we maintain, and the object that we pursue. (Here Dr Thomson read the petition, which, after alluding to what was done in 1823, to the subsequent ineffectual attempts at arrangement, and to the grounds on which slavery is to be

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condemned, concludes with words of the following import).

“That your petitioners therefore do approach your most Honourable House, not only with a deep feeling of compassion for 800,000 oppressed and suffering slaves; but under the heavier pressure of a conscience burdened with the guilt of participating in the iniquitous oppression; and with all the energy with which a petitioning people can respectfully urge a representative legislature, do implore your most Honourable House, in its wisdom, to adopt effectual measures for the immediate and total abolition of slavery throughout the colonies of the empire.

“And that, at the same time, your petitioners, equally anxious for the safety and improvement of the black population, and for the securing to the white inhabitants the uninjured and peaceful enjoyment of their legitimate possessions, do also petition your most Honourable House, contemporaneously with the decree for the abolition of slavery, to make such provisional enactments as shall be necessary or expedient, for protecting the white population, if their safety shall appear to be endangered; for promoting the temporal welfare and moral improvement of the negroes; and, in general, for securing the interests of all parties, who may be affected by the great measure of emancipation.”

I was anxious that the meeting should hear, in the outset, the concluding part of the petition, because it goes to contradict the misapprehensions and misrepresentations I have alluded to. When, in virtue of my privilege as a member of the Society, I took the liberty of moving an amendment upon the resolutions proposed at the former meeting, I said that I desiderated the word “immediate” in these resolutions; but it must be in the recollection of every man who was present on that occasion, that

I qualified my declaration by an expression of those very sentiments which are contained in the conclusion of the petition you have now heard read. I am the more anxious that this should be known, because not only the enemies of the abolition of slavery have laid hold of that single word, and severed it most unjustly from its proper accompaniments, but even those who agree with us as to the necessity of abolition, and only differ from us as to the period at which it should be effected, have chosen, in their newspaper advertisement, to change the word *immediate* into *instant*, evidently for the purpose of rendering our measure more obnoxious, and taken good care to cut away from it the explanations by which it was qualified. And this very day, they have been circulating among you, as you entered the room, a hand-bill with the obvious design of persuading you, by a perverted application of the word *practicable*, to regard our views as utterly chimerical and absurd—a circumstance the more to be wondered at, that they yesterday solicited us to grant them a portion of our funds to assist them in getting forward their petition for gradual emancipation; and that if they were not greatly encouraged, they were not at least absolutely or finally refused.

At the former meeting, many persons were alarmed, or pretended to be alarmed, at the word “immediate,” and spread abroad the report that, according to our proposal, the legislature should pass resolutions, or the government should issue an order, declaring that the slaves are all forthwith free. Such an idea, I will venture to say, never

entered into the mind of a human being connected with this Society. The word *immediate* may no doubt be considered as a strong word; but you will observe that it is used as contrasted with the word *gradual*. And were I to criticise the term *gradual* as certain opponents have treated the term *immediate*, I could easily, by the help of a little quibbling, bring you to the conclusion, that as hitherto employed it means that the abolition is never to take place, and that, by putting it into their petition, they are to be understood as deprecating rather than asking the emancipation of the slaves. "*Immediate*," they argue, "evanishes as soon as you utter it; it is gone before your petition reaches parliament." How absurd! If I should say to my servant while engaged in work, "You must go to the south side of the town with a message for me *immediately*," is it indeed implied in the order I have given him, that he could not fulfil it, unless he set off without his hat, without his coat, without his shoes, without those habiliments which are requisite for his appearing decently in the streets of Edinburgh, and executing the task that I had assigned him? (Hear, hear, and laugh.) The meaning of the word as used by us is perfectly clear, and cannot be misapprehended by any one: it is not to be made a subject of metaphysical animadversion: it is to be considered and understood under the direction of common sense, and especially as modified and expounded by those statements with which it is associated both in our resolutions and in the petition; and viewed in that light, *immediate*

abolition is not merely an intelligible phrase, but one that does not warrant a particle of the alarm which some have affected to take at it, and is not liable to any one of those objections which some have been pleased to make to it.

Sir, we found our petition for immediate abolition on those great principles which we all agree in maintaining to be the only right rule of human and Christian conduct, and which you have heard so well stated by my reverend friend Mr Buchanan. We hold that *man cannot have property in man*. (Cheers.) No man is entitled to make himself the slave of another. Still less is he entitled to make a slave of his fellow-creature. That he may be empowered to purchase his fellow-creature, to keep him as his property, or to treat him as a slave, he must have authority from God, who is the great sovereign of the world, who may do as he will with his own, who may punish his subjects in the manner that is agreeable to himself, and who, we are assured, as judge of all the earth, will do that which is right. But he who, without Divine authority—and surely the West India slave-holders will not have the courage to plead such a sanction—claims a right of property in human beings, claims that which violates all that is sacred and true. That man cannot hold property in man is a proposition which is self-evident: it does not bear an argument: and he who maintains it, must be prepared to admit, that if the white man can hold property in the black man, the black man can hold property in the white man, —a doctrine which, as soon as it is carried into ope-

ration, breaks up the whole frame of society, and reduces all things into absolute anarchy and confusion.* (Cheers.) Slavery is hostile to the original and essential rights of our common humanity—contrary to the inflexible and paramount demands of moral justice—at eternal variance with the spirit and maxims of revealed religion—inimical to all that is merciful in the heart, and holy in the conduct—and on these accounts, necessarily exposed and subject to the curse of Almighty God. (Great applause.) And if this be a correct description of the demerit of slavery, and if we engage in a system possessing such characteristics, we are sinning in the sight of our Maker, and there lies upon us an awful and overwhelming responsibility. The guilt does not consist merely in *making* men slaves; it consists as much in *keeping* them slaves. The present slaveholders, and their advocates in this country, cannot escape by setting up such a distinction. It avails them nothing. For if it be unlawful, iniquitous, and unchristian, to steal a man and force him into bondage, it must be equally unlawful, iniquitous, and unchristian, to retain him in that state, whether

* An illustration of this may be found in the treatment of white people—of British Christians—by the Algerines. Why was there an armament sent out, and a war prosecuted to rescue the former from the bondage they were kept in by the latter? Is moral justice different in one part of the world from what it is in another? Is it indeed maintained that might is right, and that right is might? Is this the principle which God has established in the world? And is it to be avowed by our statesmen and our moralists, that the strong may, at any time and in any place, make slaves of the weak?

he has been purchased, or received as a gift, or got by inheritance, or obtained in any other way whatever. The crime is the same in both cases. The unfortunate victim of cupidity is deprived of that personal freedom which is his birthright: it is taken from him, or it is withheld from him—no matter which: and he thereby suffers a wrong which is denounced by the law of nature and by the law of revelation, and which cannot be persevered in by us, or receive countenance from us, without involving us in moral guilt. (Hear, hear.)

Such, Sir, are the principles which we maintain on this great question. And when we adopt these principles as the rule of our judgment, and the guide of our conduct, you must admit that we take up our position upon ground which is immovable. We stand upon a foundation which is composed of sound and durable materials, which is linked by indissoluble ties to the throne of the eternal God, and which, assail it as our enemies may, can never be overthrown. (Long-continued cheers.) What then are we to do as moral and religious and accountable beings? Are we to view the subject of emancipation as a mere matter of state policy, or financial arrangement? Are we to have our attention occupied and engrossed with minute inquiries into what may be its profit and its loss, its influence on the revenue, or its effects on commerce and trade? Are we to wait till we hear and discuss and decide upon all the allegations that may be made, and all the sophistry that may be urged, by those who are more immediately concerned in upholding slavery, and

evidently determined that it shall not cease? No, Sir: it is ascertained without reference to any of these circumstances—it is dictated by unchangeable truth and rectitude, and is therefore put beyond the reach of controversy, that slavery is a crime; that to engage or to persist in it is to contract guilt in the sight of Heaven; and, consequently, that being aware of this, we are bound to make no delay in hastening out of the transgression, and putting an end to it, wherever it has obtained a footing in our dominions. To say that we will come out of the sin by degrees—that we will only forsake it slowly, and step by step—that we will pause and hesitate and look well about us before we consent to abandon its gains and its pleasures—that we will allow another age to pass by ere we throw off the load of iniquity that is lying so heavy upon us, lest certain secularities should be injuriously affected—and that we will postpone the duty of “doing justly and loving mercy,” till we have removed every petty difficulty out of the way, and got all the conflicting interests that are involved in the measure reconciled and satisfied;—to say this, is to trample on the demands of moral obligation, and to disregard the voice which speaks to us from heaven. The path of duty is plain before us, and we have nothing to do but to enter it at once, and to walk in it without turning to the right hand or to the left. Our concern is not with the result that may follow our obedience to the Divine will. Our great and primary concern is to obey that will. God reigns over his universe in the exercise of infinite perfection: he commands us to let

the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke; and submitting, without procrastination, and without any attempts at compromise, to that command, we may be assured that he will take care of all the effects that can be produced by compliance with his authority, and give demonstration to the truth that obedience to his behests is our grand and only security for a prosperous lot.

‘We are by no means indifferent to the expediency of the case. On the contrary, we think ourselves prepared to prove, by fair reasoning and by ascertained fact, that the expediency of the thing is all on our side; that immediate abolition is the only secure and proper way of attaining the object which we all profess to have in view; that to defer the measure to a distant period, and to admit the propriety of getting at it by a course of mitigation, is the surest mode of frustrating every hope we might otherwise entertain, and giving over the slaves to interminable bondage. To this topic I shall by and by take the liberty of directing your attention. But, in the mean time, I cannot desist from pressing it upon the meeting, that the principles on which we plead for abolition at all, go directly and irresistibly to the duty and necessity of *immediate* abolition. We cannot keep a human being in the condition of a slave unless we can show a warrant from God for doing so, or impiously assume the prerogative of God, and unjustly encroach on the undeniable rights of our brother. We can show no such warrant; and nothing therefore remains for us but to abandon the impiety and injus-

tice which we have been perpetrating, by instantly setting the bondsman free. The very proposal to continue in the practice of this sinful domination, till we have settled all the inferior questions which have been mixed up with it, and adjusted all the *pros* and *cons* of a worldly expediency which have been brought into the discussion of it, casts a doubt on the ultimate and effectual abatement of what we profess so much to abhor. Our postponement of the moral obligation indicates such comparative indifference to what should be the paramount motive in a Christian's mind, that there is little chance of our pressing forward to the ultimate abolition, with that energy of purpose, and resoluteness of exertion, which its accomplishment will require. And, descending from the elevation on which religion has placed us, and where we can fight the battles of truth and equity and mercy with advantage, we come down to the level on which our adversaries choose to combat, because they can there give us misrepresentation for fact, sophistry for argument, and promise for performance; and in this way we not only desert the post to which duty binds us, but put the whole cause in jeopardy, and leave it very much at the mercy of those men who will consent to *gradual* abolition, or to the measures which are implied in it, merely because they can thereby and without much difficulty defeat the scheme of final and total emancipation.

Keeping by these views, we have no occasion to go into the details of the slave system, or to prove the evil of it by special instances of cruelty and op-

pression. We are under no embarrassment from having to charge individuals with acts of inhumanity, or to bring forward such a number of facts as may give a practical demonstration of the infelicity and misery of that state which we wish to abolish. Many individuals among the slave-holders may be distinguished by their consideration and kindness towards the unfortunate beings who are subjected to their authority. I have no doubt many of them are entitled to that praise,—and let it be supposed that all of them endeavour to make their slaves as comfortable and happy as slaves can be. At any rate I am not one of those who would pass even upon that class of men an unqualified and sweeping sentence of condemnation. I am willing to allow that, as to the instances of atrocity which have been adduced, there has been sometimes unintentional mistake, and sometimes wilful exaggeration,* and that, after picturing certain scenes of severe exaction and tyrannical punishment, it is not fair to assert that these are only specimens of what is happening every day and every hour in every corner of every estate. I can dispense with such statements altogether: and I return to the grand principle, that man cannot have property in man. (Cheers.) To make or to keep him a slave is to violate that charter of liberty which God has given to every human being whom

* From every charge of this kind, there must be exempted the "Anti-Slavery Reporter,"—a publication distinguished by the cautious accuracy of its statements, as well as by the soundness of its principles, and the conclusiveness of its doctrines.

he has made. Justice and humanity equally reclaim against such a robbery of inherent right. And I need nothing more to satisfy me that the slave must be miserable, because on the inherent right which he possesses must be based all that is great in character or happy in condition,—deprive him of the one and he necessarily loses the other. If any thing else be requisite to give me a full impression of the wretchedness of the slave, it is to be found in this, that his master is invested with absolute power over him as if he were a mere inferior animal; and knowing, as we do, from all our experience of human nature, that absolute power must be abused where it is held and exercised for purposes of aggrandizement, and where those who are subject to it are continually exposed to its caprices and its resentments, we cannot doubt that the portion of the slave, as a sensitive, intellectual, and moral being, must in ten thousand instances, be that of bitter suffering and intolerable debasement. This I hold to be an essential characteristic of slavery: I could not doubt of its tendency and effects being what I have now described, though there were not a single instance of the fact upon record. And, therefore, as it involves in it impious usurpation,—radical injustice,—boundless oppression and inhumanity,—as these horrid attributes are inseparable from its very existence, how can we, who are a Christian people, forbear calling upon our Christian Legislature, to proceed without compromise or reserve to its immediate, its complete, its perpetual extinction?

But, Sir, though the production of particular

cases is not at all indispensable to my argument for immediate emancipation, it may be useful for the purpose of giving a more distinct and forcible demonstration of the malignant nature of the slave system; and, therefore, I shall bring before you,—not a lengthened detail of atrocities, though that might be easily done, but only a selection, from which may be seen, at once, the miserable condition of the slaves themselves, and the light in which they are regarded by those who are expected to co-operate with us in promoting their gradual improvement, and thus preparing them for final disenthralment.

In a Jamaica newspaper, an advertisement appeared of a female slave having run away from the estate of an unmarried lady. A reward was offered for her apprehension. And there was added as a hint for discovering her, the following clause: “It is strongly suspected that the said slave is harboured by her husband, William Smith.” Observe, that by a person in the shape of a woman, and in the station of a landed proprietor, it is accounted and proclaimed as a crime that the female slave should seek for shelter under the roof of her husband, and that he should afford protection to his toil-worn and suffering wife! (Hear, hear.) What must be the state of society where such an advertisement could appear, and where such a sentiment could be avowed?*

* How different in this point was the Jewish law, which yet is referred to as a justification of colonial slavery! “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped

To give you some faint conception of what the prevailing ideas of criminal justice are when the slave and the master are both concerned, let me quote the following example. In Jamaica, the premises of a Mr Edie were burglariously entered by two thieves. He desired his slave Thomas to scare them away with his loaded gun. The slave, obliged to obey his master's orders, took his gun, fired it—in all likelihood at random, it being very dark—and unhappily shot one of the men. For this he was tried. On the evidence of Mr Edie he was convicted of manslaughter, and his sentence was, that he should be doomed to hard labour in the workhouse for twelve months, and flogged with thirty-nine lashes at going in, and with thirty-nine at coming out! One would have thought that the master alone was the guilty person, because the slave had no alternative but that of doing what he was commanded, or submitting to the ordinary penalty of the cart-whip. And the court that tried the case did consider the owner as much to blame in directing a slave to use a gun in such circumstances; but he was not brought to trial; and they only endeavoured to make *him* suffer by the sentence pronounced upon the slave! The guilty master was indeed punished, but his punishment consisted in the subjection of the innocent slave to a year's hard labour in the workhouse, and to twice thirty-nine stripes with

from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.”—Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

the horrible lacerating scourge! Can any thing be conceived to exceed this as a savage perversion of every rule of justice? What can be looked for in the way of amelioration in a system which leads criminal judges to punish the master by torturing his slave! And is there any remedy for such a state of things but the decisive step of breaking asunder that unholy relationship which makes the one party a mere tool, not only for adding to the gains, but for enduring the stripes that should have followed the guilt, of the other? (*Hear, hear.*)

The next instance I quote illustrates the notions of arbitrary and of lenient punishment which obtain in the slave system. In 1826 the Legislature of Jamaica passed the following enactment:

“§ 37. And *in order to restrain arbitrary punishments*, be it further enacted, that no slave, on any plantation, or settlement, or in any of the workhouses or gaols in this island, shall receive *any more than ten lashes* at one time and for one offence, unless the owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer, of such plantation or settlement, having such slave in his care, or keeper of such workhouse, or keeper of such gaol, shall be present; and that no such owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer, workhouse-keeper, or gaol-keeper, shall on any account punish a slave with more than *thirty-nine lashes* at one time and for one offence, nor inflict, nor suffer to be inflicted, such last-mentioned punishment, nor any other number of lashes on the same day, nor until the delinquent has recovered from the effect of any former punishment, under a penalty not less than ten pounds, nor more than twenty pounds for every offence,” &c.

Now observe, Sir, that this enactment is passed

in 1826 professedly to *restrain arbitrary punishments*—that it is no better than what was enacted in 1816, and even so far back as 1788—that it gives liberty to the *driver* to inflict at his own discretion *ten lashes* with the cart-whip on any of the negroes whom he superintends, man, woman, or child—that the power of inflicting *thirty-nine lashes* with the same dreadful instrument on any negro of either sex, and of any age, may be exercised by the *owner*, or the *attorney*, or the *guardian*, or the *executor*, or the *administrator*, or the *overseer*, or the *workhouse-keeper*, or the *gaol-keeper*—that all this may be done by any one of these persons without any trial, without the order of any magistrate, without any offence committed, and without any legal responsibility on the part of the individuals to whom such a discretion is entrusted. And this enactment is said to be for the purpose of “*restraining arbitrary punishments*,”—it is not only recent, but held out as a step in the progress of mitigation and improvement—and it is brought forward by the West India Committee as a proof of the humanity of the Colonial Legislatures in general, and of the Jamaica Legislature in particular! It requires no comment of mine to show this meeting that these tender mercies of the Colonial Legislatures are cruel—that such things could not be perpetrated under the form of legislative enactment, or appealed to as evidence of liberality and kindness, were it not that slavery is destructive of all just and kindly feeling towards those who are its victims—and that there is for them, even in the laws which are pretended to have their

welfare in view, no security and no comfort whatsoever.

There is nothing, perhaps, which gives a more correct and significant representation of the inherent vice of the system, than the ideas entertained in the West Indies of indulgence or liberality to the slaves. I find that, in a statement of the proceedings of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, with respect to the Codrington estates in the island of Barbadoes belonging to that Society, it is mentioned, as its vindication from the charge of cruelty and severity, that, while the slaves are working in the fields under a vertical sun, they are supplied with draughts of water!—that mothers having three children are to have Saturday afternoon for taking care of them—a privilege boasted of as being given in 1829, though the whole of Saturday was given by an order of the Society to the negroes generally, more than a century before—so wonderful has been the progress of humanity!—and that when a mother has eight children alive—which is but a very rare occurrence—she is permitted to have the whole of Thursday to look after that numerous charge!—If such be held forth as admirable examples of the generosity which is extended to the poor slaves, surely it is a fair inference that their situation is one of inconceivable hardship and suffering, and that they are regarded as destitute of all title to ordinary consideration and equitable treatment.

The only other fact I shall specify is the horrible case of the Mosses, of which many of you have heard,

and which I shall relate in the words of Mr Huskisson, who was one of the Secretaries of State at the time, and who had occasion to write a despatch upon the very subject, in consequence of a strange application from Governor Grant for a modification of punishment.

"Those facts of the case," says Mr H., "*which are proved beyond dispute*, appear to be as follows:

"Kate was a domestic slave, and is stated to have been guilty of theft; she is also accused of disobedience, in refusing to mend her clothes and do her work, and this was the more immediate cause of her punishment. On the 22d of July 1826, she was confined in the stocks, and she was not released till the 8th of August following, being a period of seventeen days. The stocks were so constructed, that she could not sit up and lie down at pleasure, and she remained in them night and day. During this period she was flogged repeatedly, one of the overseers thinks about six times, and red pepper was rubbed upon her eyes to prevent her sleeping. Tasks were given her which, in the opinion of the same overseer, she was incapable of performing; sometimes because they were beyond her powers, at other times because she could not see to do them on account of the pepper having been rubbed on her eyes: and she was flogged for failing to accomplish these tasks. A violent distemper had been prevalent on the plantation during the summer. It is in evidence, that on one of the days of Kate's confinement she complained of fever, and that one of the floggings which she received was the day after she had made this complaint. When she was taken out of the stocks she appeared to be cramped, and was then again flogged. The very day of her release she was sent to field labour, (though heretofore a house servant,) and on the evening of the third day ensuing, was brought before her owners as being ill and refusing to work, and she then again complained of having had fever. They

were of opinion that she had none then, but gave directions to the driver if she should be ill to bring her to them for medicines in the morning. The driver took her to the negro-house, and again flogged her, though, this time, apparently, without orders from her owners to do so. In the morning, at seven o'clock, she was taken to work in the field, where she died at noon."

Mr and Mrs Moss, who had committed these cruelties, the recital of which makes one's blood run cold, had a bill of indictment preferred against them for murder, by the Attorney-General. This bill was returned "not found" by the grand jury, though the evidence is of such a nature that no jury whatever in this country would have hesitated to bring in a verdict of guilty upon it. But the Attorney-General prepared two other bills for misdemeanors—*misdemeanors*!—one against Mr Moss, and the other against Mr Moss and his wife. These being found, the case was laid before a petit jury, and after a trial which lasted for sixteen hours, a verdict of guilty was found upon both indictments. And the court sentenced Mr and Mrs Moss to imprisonment in the common jail of Nassau, for five calendar months, and Mr Moss, to the payment of a fine of L.300, over and besides the costs of the prosecution. Every man must see that this punishment came far short of what was due to such aggravated and monstrous cruelty. Scarcely any punishment, indeed, that could have been inflicted, was adequate to the enormity of the offence. And had a slave been convicted of one-tenth part of the guilt, the poor wretch would have been torn to pieces with the cart-whip, or consigned

to the gallows without ceremony. But in that miserable country, the punishment was accounted a great deal too severe. The two culprits were held in the highest esteem by the most respectable inhabitants of the town and colony. These applied to the governor, General Grant, for a remission of the sentence. They testified to the excellence of the Mosses, and particularly to their humane conduct towards their slaves. They visited them while in the gaol, suffering a short imprisonment for the unheard-of barbarity they had practised on a poor helpless female negro. And when these persons of worth and probity at length were liberated in course of law, there was a feast and a jubilee got up on the occasion, at which the inhabitants of the Bahamas celebrated their release, as if they had been martyrs for the cause of righteousness and mercy! (*Hear, hear, hear!*)

You have here, Sir, a very instructive specimen of what is considered a most respectable and humane character among the white inhabitants of the Bahamas. And if this be the case, I may well ask what will be accounted misconduct and cruelty in that quarter. Had the treatment of the poor female slave by her master and mistress stood alone, we might have considered it as an instance of hardheartedness on the part of the Mosses, and nothing more. But you will observe, from the manner in which it was spoken of, and from the attention paid to the perpetrators of it, that it was just an emanation from the slave system, and characteristic of it as a system of incurable evil, fertile in heartless oppression, and crime, and misery.

I might have mentioned other cases, all marked with the same features, and leading to the same conclusion.* But I shall merely add the view given of the slave by Mr Dwarris, to satisfy you, that nothing efficient for putting an end to slavery, or for materially lessening its horrors, can be expected, short of an act of the legislature, restoring to the slaves their freedom, and placing them, in this respect, on an equality with their white masters. Mr Dwarris is the only surviving member of a commission appointed to inquire into and report concerning the civil and

* One of the most shocking fruits of the system may be found in the licentiousness of the white masters, and the consequences which immediately result from it. These men have the young females so much under their control and influence, and have so little restraint on their passions, that illicit intercourse with them is notoriously prevalent. This is bad enough; but the mischief assumes a most revolting form, when it is recollected that the children thus procreated are necessarily slaves—that the horrid spectacle is exhibited of *a father seeing his own offspring driven to their labour in the field like cattle, and like cattle bought and sold in the market—the price, peradventure, finding its way into his own pocket!* To speak of such a thing before a promiscuous audience was impossible. But it should sink deep into the heart of every one who feels averse to immediate emancipation. As matters must continue to be, so long as slavery is tolerated, such dismal facts as the one now noticed are unavoidable. No regulation can prevent them, so long as the slave is property. And ought that system which admits of the gross abomination now specified, to be allowed, by a Christian people, to continue one moment longer? Perish the thought!

More shocking instances even than this might be quoted. What can the reader think of an owner deliberately violating the person of a female slave under age, and of his being acquitted, when tried for the crime, on the ground that the victim of his brutal lust was—*his property?*

criminal justice of the West Indies. In his report, he uses the following language:—

“The poor slave, if left to himself, is generally contented and happy. Possessing a spot to which he is commonly attached, looking to his master for support in health, care in sickness, and advice and help in distress and difficulty, the improvident negro, far from pining in misery, dances and sleeps, trifles and dreams away life, thoughtless, careless, and happily ignorant of his own unprotected condition, and of the impotent fury of the laws. A little more time, and a little less work, form the narrow boundary of the wants and wishes of the negro.”

Nothing, I confess, Sir, in the whole history of this melancholy subject, is so deeply interesting and so awfully instructive, as the passage I have now read to you from Mr Dwarriſ’ report. Here we have, in a report which speaks the sentiments of the great body of the West India oppressors,—here we have the slave represented as on a level with the brutes that perish. He is not in a single particular regarded as a human being. It is not once supposed that he has intellectual faculties and moral affections,—that he is responsible to the God that made him,—that he has a soul for which, as for ours, the Saviour died, and which, like ours, is destined for immortality. Such a supposition is not even glanced at. He is spoken of as a mere animal, which, if left alone, if unheeded by those who are desirous to exalt him to his proper place in the scale of being, and to rescue him from all that is most miserable in this miserable world, will “dance

and sleep, and trifle and dream away life!" Sir, I need not tell the meeting I address, that this is not the original nature of the negro, more than it is ours. If it be truly descriptive of him as he is found in the colonies, then let us remember that it is slavery which has made him so,—that it is the native effect of slavery, and the almost acknowledged interest of his owners to keep him down to that degradation,—and that this affords us the most commanding reason of all for going to the government and to the legislature, and saying to them, that in measures of mere amelioration there is no hope for the slave, and that he must be emancipated immediately. (Loud cheers).

But, Sir, I must contradict Mr Dwarris in one main part of his statement. I cannot admit "that the slave is thoughtless, careless, and happily ignorant of his own unprotected condition, and of the impotent fury of the laws." The contrary is the fact. He cannot be ignorant of the existence and severity of the cart-whip,—he cannot be ignorant of the laws, of whose partiality to the master that works and punishes him at his pleasure he has daily and hourly experience,—he cannot be ignorant of the danger and hopelessness of his making any complaint against the evil usage to which he is subjected—and especially, he is not ignorant of the miseries of bondage, and, therefore, not "thoughtless," or "careless," about regaining the liberty of which he has been deprived. I know, Sir, it has been said over and over by the advocates of slavery, that the slave does not care for liberty, and is well contented

without it. But while I would contradict such an assertion on the broad ground of its belying the first principles of human nature, I beg to contradict it on an authority which the slave-holders must not question or deny, because it is their own. When the white people in Jamaica were attacked and endangered by the Maroons, they called in the aid of their slaves; and to stimulate the exertions of these "thoughtless, careless, ignorant" creatures they offered them a reward; and what was the reward, think you? Will it be believed that they offered them their *liberty*?—(Cheers)—that very liberty which we are endeavouring to procure for them, but which the planters gravely tell us the slaves neither desire nor value! And the poor slaves, animated by the prospect of the promised manumission, not only gave their exertions by day, and their watchings by night, in the perilous contest, but hazarded their lives, and shed their blood, for the protection of their masters. (Hear, hear).

We are told that the system of slavery should be mitigated, and that a course of amendment should be pursued with a view to its final abolition. It appears to me, Sir, to be as clear as sunshine that no effectual mitigation of slavery is ever to be expected,—that the nature and circumstances of the case forbid such an expectation,—and that whatever may be accomplished in this way will prove a complete delusion;—it will only deceive the abolitionists, and ruin their cause. The men through whose instrumentality, or assistance at least, we can carry on a plan of amelioration with any success, even

supposing that our authorities at home should interfere, are the planters themselves, and the white people on the spot. Now, what have they done in reality during all the time that they were left to their own legislation and their own will? The subject has been much discussed,—the practical evils of the system have been a thousand times exposed to them in the most convincing and eloquent terms,—they had the sufferings of the slaves before their eyes, appealing to their hearts for redress,—and censure, and remonstrance, and argument have been employed to arouse them to feelings of pity, and to plans of reform. And yet every one acquainted with the history of colonial slavery must be satisfied that no attempts worth speaking of were ever made, and that the system has continued in all its despotism, and in all its vileness. Nay, but Parliament has interfered; and, seven years ago, our government sent out orders in council to enforce the doing of what long experience showed there was no willingness to do. And what has been the consequence,—what effect has been produced? Why, Sir, one reason of the meetings that are now taking place throughout the country having been called is, the notorious undeniable fact that the orders in council have been disobeyed and contemned. The chartered colonies have done absolutely nothing,—but laughed at our interference, and proclaimed defiance. The crown colonies have done next to nothing. In every essential point they have refused to make any change; and when you examine the particulars in which they have consented, as it were, to do what

was suggested or prescribed to them, you find that these amendments were the merest evasions, and that sometimes, under the appearance of improving, they had the real effect of making things worse. There was the case of compulsory manumission, which may be allowed to be a very important measure,—as to that they were quite refractory. They would not hear of it. The Barbadoes legislators hold the following language respecting it: “Compulsory manumission is a direct inversion of the right of property, absolutely destructive of that right, by investing slaves with the power, at their own will, and against the will of their masters, of purchasing their freedom. If this were once admitted, there would be an end to all security to mortgagees and others; any attempt at compensation would only prove delusive.” “Unless, therefore, it is intended to ruin the colonies, and to convert every plantation into a poor-house, the plan of compulsory manumission must be abandoned.” I object, as well as the colonial legislature, to the doctrine of compulsory manumission; though, on very different grounds, I hold it to be quite incompetent for us, on any sound principle, to hedge in a slave to this mode of emancipating himself. You have already done him the wrong of making him a slave: he has an inalienable title to his freedom at this very moment; you have power to restore him to that freedom by your own deed; and if expense attend the transaction, the burden of that expense should lie upon you: and yet you would make the slave himself pay it all,—in the additional toils he

must undergo,—and by his giving up the fruits and earnings of these toils to his thankless oppressive master. I could say much in condemnation of this plan. I only notice it thus, however, to express my abhorrence of, to lift my protest against, the idea of the British legislature, with its great power, and its high character, saying to the poor, helpless, unprotected slave,—all in kindness to the tyrant who unrighteously possesses him,—“You may be free, but your freedom must be wrought out by your paying a price for it!” But, Sir, I have adduced the case of manumission as affording a specimen of the temper with which the West India legislators and planters receive those orders which this country sends out, to mitigate the evils of slavery, with a view to its ultimate suppression, even when these orders are, one would think, most considerably heedful of their interests. They are against permitting the slave to labour for his own deliverance; and if I should say to them, “there is the value of the slave in sterling money—let him go,” they will not accept of it and give him his freedom. This is their general doctrine, and there is no lack of instances in which they have actually refused manumission even on the terms I have mentioned. Here, Sir, is the secret of their resistance. Your plans of amelioration are an invasion of their rights of property. I beg the meeting to mark this, and to carry it along with them through the whole discussion. The slaves, they say, are their *property*. Once admit this,—and so long as slavery is permitted to exist under the sanction of Parliament, you

do admit it,—once admit this, and all your arguments for interference are vain, and all your plans for amelioration are fruitless. The whole question may be said to hang upon this point. If the slaves are not property, then slavery is at an end. The slave-holders see this most clearly; they see that while you allow these slaves to be their *property*, you act inconsistently and oppressively in intermeddling, as you propose to do, with what is theirs as much as any other of their goods and chattels: you must proceed, therefore, in your measures for amelioration, as you call it, with “hesitating steps and slow;” and there is nothing you can do for restraining punishment, for regulating labour, for enforcing manumission, for introducing education and Christianity, which will not be met with the remonstrance, undeniably just by your own concessions, that you are encroaching on the sacred rights of property,—the slave-holders see all this, and they can employ it to paralyse and defeat all your efforts to get at emancipation, and to prepare for it. It is on this account that I wish it settled in your minds, as a fixed and immutable principle, that there is and can be no property of man in man. Adopt this principle, and give it that ascendancy over your minds to which it is entitled—and slavery is swept away.

I do not deny, Sir, notwithstanding what I have now said, that the evils of practical slavery may be lessened. By parliamentary enactments, by colonial arrangements, by appeals to the judgment and feelings of planters, and by various other means, a cer-

tain degree of melioration *may* be secured. But I say, in the *first* place, that, with all that you can accomplish, or reasonably expect, of mitigation, you cannot alter the nature of slavery itself. With every improvement you have superinduced upon it, you have not made it less debasing, less cruel, less destructive in its essential character. The black man is still the *property* of the white man. And that one circumstance not only implies in it the transgression of inalienable right and everlasting justice, but is the fruitful and necessary source of numberless mischiefs, the very thought of which harrows up the soul, and the infliction of which no superintendence of any government can either prevent or control. Mitigate and keep down the evil as much as you can, still it is there in all its native virulence, and still it will do its malignant work in spite of you. The improvements you have made are merely superficial. You have not reached the seat and vital spring of the mischief. You have only concealed in some measure, and for a time, its inherent enormity. Its essence remains unchanged and untouched, and is ready to unfold itself whenever a convenient season arrives, notwithstanding all your precaution, and all your vigilance, in those manifold acts of injustice and inhumanity, which are its genuine and its invariable fruits. You may white-wash the sepulchre,—you may put upon it every adornment that fancy can suggest,—you may cover it over with all the flowers and evergreens that the garden or the fields can furnish, so that it will appear beautiful outwardly unto men. But it is a

sepulchre still,—full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. (Great cheering). Disguise slavery as you will,—put into the cup all the pleasing and palatable ingredients which you can discover in the wide range of nature and of art,—still it is a bitter, bitter, bitter draught, from which the understanding and the heart of every man, in whom nature works unsophisticated and unbiassed, recoils with unutterable aversion and abhorrence. (Immense cheering). Why, Sir, slavery is the very Upas tree of the moral world, beneath whose pestiferous shade all intellect languishes, and all virtue dies. (Reiterated cheering). And if you would get quit of the evil, you must go more thoroughly and effectually to work than you can ever do by any or by all of those palliatives, which are included under the term “mitigation.” The foul sepulchre must be taken away. The cup of oppression must be dashed to pieces on the ground. The pestiferous tree must be cut down and eradicated; it must be, root and branch of it, cast into the consuming fire, and its ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. (Loud and long-continued cheering). It is thus that you must deal with slavery. You must annihilate it,—annihilate it now,—and annihilate it for ever.

Get your mitigation. I say, in the *second* place, that you are thereby, in all probability, farther away than ever from your object. It is not to the Government or the Parliament at home that you are to look—neither is it to the legislatures and planters abroad that you are to look—for accomplishing the abolition of negro slavery. Sad experience shows that, if left

to themselves, they will do nothing efficient in this great cause. It is to the sentiments of the people at large that you are to look, to the spread of intellectual light, to the prevalence of moral feeling, to the progress, in short, of public opinion, which, when resting on right principles, and moving in a right direction, must, in this free and Christian country, prove irresistible. (Great applause.) But observe, Sir, the public mind will not be sufficiently affected by the statement of abstract truths, however just, or by reasonings on the tendencies of a system, however accurate. It must be more or less influenced by what is visible, or by what is easily known and understood of the actual atrocities which accompany slavery, wherever it is left to its own proper operation. Let it be seen in its native vileness and cruelty, as exhibited when not interfered with by the hand of authority, and it excites universal and unqualified detestation. But let its harsher asperities be rubbed off; take away the more prominent parts of its iniquity, see that it look somewhat smoother and milder than it did before; make such regulations as ought, if faithfully executed, to check its grosser acts of injustice and oppression; give it the appearance of its being put under the humanizing sway of religious education and instruction; do all this, and you produce one effect at least,—you modify the indignation of a great number of the community; you render slavery much less obnoxious; you enable its advocates and supporters to say in reply to our denunciations of its wickedness, “O, the slaves are now comfortable and happy; they do not suffer what they

did; they are protected and well treated," and in proof of all this, they point to what are called "mitigations." But mark me, Sir; under these mitigations, slavery still exists, ready at every convenient season to break forth in all its countless forms of inhumanity; meanwhile the public feeling in a great measure subsides; and when the public feeling—such an important and indispensable element in our attempts to procure abolition—is allowed to subside, tell me, Sir, when, and where, and by what means it is again to be roused into activity. (Hear, hear, hear.) I must say, for one, that though I sympathize with my sable brethren, when I hear of them being spared even one lash of the cart-whip; yet when I take a more enlarged view of their condition—when I consider the nature of that system under which they are placed, and when I look forward to their deliverance, and the means by which alone it is to be effected, I am tempted, and almost if not altogether persuaded, to deprecate that insidious thing termed "mitigation," because it directly tends to perpetuate the mighty evil, which will by and by throw off the improvements, by which it is glossed over, as quite unnatural to it, will ultimately grow up again into all its former dreadfulness, and continue to wither and crush beneath it, all that is excellent and glorious in man. (Great cheering.)

In the *third* place, by insisting on your plan of mitigation, you furnish the slave-holders with a weapon by which they will defeat the cause of abolition. They will resist all interference on your part with their alleged *property*, as long as they can; but

when they see you bent and determined on introducing improvements, with a view to ultimate emancipation, and as necessary for bringing it about, they will so far acquiesce and yield as to suit their own purpose—which is to disappoint your hopes. They will gratify you with one change this year, and with another change the next year; they will pretend to adopt this amendment, and to repress that abuse; they will present to you a surface less ugly and revolting than what you had been accustomed to see. But then the slaves are still their *property*—remember that—and they have numberless methods and opportunities of oppressing, grinding, tormenting these poor miserable beings. There will still be pangs and sorrows which wring their hearts in secret—there will be groans and sighs which can only ascend to heaven—and we rejoice to think that the ear of Deity is ever open to their cry. But *you* can never hear these groans—*you* can never know of these pangs. Slavery continues to reign. The preparation for its abolition seemed to be going on. And yet the upholders of this incurable system, as I must pronounce it to be, have been merely amusing and deceiving you. You have taught them—you have encouraged them to do so. They have removed some things that offended you—they have supplied other that you said were wanting. In one word, they have “*mitigated*.” But examine the matter closely, and it will be discovered that those whom you necessarily trusted for carrying on the reform of the system, had been systematically evading every proposal that would trench on the essentials of their system—they

had been all along deluding you with what had the semblance, but none of the reality of improvement—and you will discover, when it is too late, that slavery remains dominant in all its worst principles and most debasing influences—that your preparatory scheme had failed in every material particular—that emancipation on that ground is as far from your reach as it was a century ago. Of all this you have a strong proof in the treatment given to the Orders in Council. These have been withstood—evaded—frustrated—moderate and indulgent as they were. The planters got the advice from some of their correspondents in this country, to do something to please the abolitionists. And in certain instances they have followed it. But we speak truly when we say, that the Orders in Council have not been obeyed in their spirit and intent. And, be assured, they will not be obeyed in that sense. It is impossible to enforce them—hearty co-operation is necessary to this, and such co-operation you can never get from the slave-holders. They can render inefficient every measure you may devise for their adoption; and *they have actually done so for seven long years.* (Hear, hear.) Above all, they have opposed the introduction of Christianity among the slaves, without which the friends of gradual abolition allow and maintain the slaves cannot be properly prepared for freedom, and without which, they admit, that all other mitigations are of little use in consequence. This they have opposed with their whole might—and this, be assured, Sir, they will continue to oppose—and to this, from the very nature of religious instruction,

and of the means for promoting it, their opposition will be successful.

And here, Sir, I must be permitted to say a little on the argument for slavery drawn from the Holy Scriptures. (Hear, hear.) I never could see that there were any of those difficulties on this subject, which have weighed with some of my worthy Christian friends. Two years ago I published my sentiments on the point, and at the same time advocated, what I am supporting this day, the cause of immediate abolition. And the longer that I have reflected on the question, the more fully am I satisfied that the views which I then expressed are sound. Our opponents say *first*, that slavery was permitted in the Old Testament; and, *secondly*, that it is not forbidden in the New.

Now, Sir, I shall not stop to point out the difference that subsists between slavery in our colonies, and slavery among the ancient Jews.* I will grant that slavery was permitted under the Old Testament dispensation. But what then? The permission was given by Him who is the great proprietor of all, to answer his own especial purposes in the management of that peculiar people, among whom the practice was allowed to prevail. He might do the same thing just now, if it seemed good in his sight. But has he done so? Can the slave-holders produce any warrant for making property of their black brethren,

* See Godwin's "Lectures on British Colonial Slavery," p. 108, for some excellent remarks on the topic. The volume is earnestly recommended to general perusal and attention, as affording correct information, and inculcating sound views.

and reducing them to the condition of slaves? If they have any warrant, let them show it, and we will bow submissively to the will of Heaven. Show me a case where a man, under the Jewish Theocracy, stole his neighbour and kept him as his property, without the sanction of the Almighty, and yet was approved of in this by the Almighty, and so far as this part of the argument goes, I contend no more. On any such case, however, I defy the most learned of our antagonists to condescend. And if slavery obtained in consequence of a Divine appointment, or a Divine permission, we can no more justify our maintaining slavery, when we can plead no such appointment and no such permission, than we could justify ourselves for sending forth an army to destroy the inhabitants of any country on the Continent, who had not made war against us, merely because the Israelites—under the authority of God—went forth to slay and to exterminate the Canaanites. This appears to me quite sufficient to set aside the argument deduced from the Old Testament. When our opponents have recourse to the existence of slavery among the Jews, they must allow us to have recourse also to the reasons for it that are assigned in the Divine record, which they so triumphantly refer to.

As to the New Testament, I here concede, not that slavery is not forbidden—but that it is not forbidden expressly or *totidem verbis*. Still this is nothing to the purpose. It is just in conformity to the wise and prudent mode which the first teachers of our religion followed, under Divine direction, in preaching the Gospel. They did not denounce every iniqui-

tous practice that prevailed in their day, and rebuke those who were addicted to it. They did not intermeddle with existing institutions by name, point out their errors, command them to be abolished, and prescribe what should be substituted in their place. They were Divinely taught to avoid this, which would have stirred up immediate opposition to Christianity, and given its enemies a handle for representing it as hostile to the obligations of civil life and political government. Their general plan was to proclaim such doctrines, and to inculcate such precepts, as, when believed and obeyed, would bring every species of injustice and wickedness to a speedy termination. Of this I can produce many examples. Did the Apostle Paul attack Nero, the great oppressor and man-slayer of his day? No; but he taught a religion which exposed Nero's tyranny to merited abhorrence, and which, if Nero had embraced it, would have put an end to his crimes. Did Paul tell husbands that they should not keep their wives as slaves, which these really were? No; but he gave them such lessons as plainly condemned that tyranny, and instructed them to treat their wives as companions, with tenderness and love. Did he take notice of and prohibit the horrible custom, at once legal and prevalent, of parents putting to death their sickly and deformed children; of their scourging and even killing their offspring at their pleasure, and without there being any appeal against their barbarity; of their selling their sons, which they were empowered to do three times, whereas they could only sell a slave once? No; but he laid such injunctions on

parents as distinctly and forcibly demonstrated those things to be contrary to the will of Heaven, and enforced a conduct towards their children with which all such treatment was at irreconcilable variance. This was the way in which the appointed promulgators of the gospel proscribed and interdicted those practices I have adverted to: and in the same way it proscribes and interdicts slavery. Its preachers did not say to slave-holders or to legislators, "You must immediately set all slaves at liberty!" But they said what was tantamount to this, and what could not but be received as a communication from the great Ruler of the world, without producing that effect. It is said in the New Testament, as it had been said in the Old, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"—every man being there affirmed to be our neighbour; and if we love our neighbours as ourselves, can we keep them slaves? It is said, "Do unto others as you would that others should do to you;" and do we follow this golden rule, or do we not despise it, when we make others slaves? It is said over and over again, that all men are our brethren: and is it a token of brotherly affection—is it not a contempt of the very phrase, when we retain any one, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, in the condition of a slave? And, to quote no more, look at the injunction which the apostle Paul lays upon those who were in possession of slaves, and upon all who stand in the relation of masters. "Masters," says he, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal;"—"forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is

there any respect of persons in him." And if masters give that which is just and equal to their servants, will they not first of all give them their freedom;—especially when an appeal is made in the way of motive, to him who is the sovereign Lord of both, and who has no respect of persons. And then, Sir, what are the doctrines of Christianity? The first and fundamental doctrine is, that we are all on a level in the sight of God, whether we are black or white in the complexion, whether we are masters or slaves—all on a level in our sinfulness and liability to perdition—all on a level in our absolute need of the grace which is revealed in the gospel—all on a level as to the interposition of Jesus Christ, who died upon a cross, that he might be for salvation to the ends of the earth—all on a level as to the faith we must cherish, and the hopes we may entertain, and the character we are to cultivate, with a view to heaven—all on a level as to the whole of that dispensation of mercy which has been established by the Redeemer, in whom we are expressly told, there is "neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all." And can we ever dream of the lawfulness or the sinlessness of making that man our slave, or of retaining him in slavery—buying and selling and treating him as a beast of burden—for whose soul, aye, and body too—both are redeemed by the Gospel—Christ shed his infinitely precious blood, and who is entitled to look forward, with ourselves, privileged as we are, to the blessedness of an eternal world? Does not the whole spirit and genius of Christianity—do not all its truths, and precepts, and prospects,

frown upon slavery as a system of rebellion against God, and as one of those very fabrics of evil, which it was intended to overthrow? I might easily have enlarged on this view. But I flatter myself I have said enough to show that those who take shelter under Christianity, as if that afforded any countenance to the slave system, are either ignorant or regardless of that revelation of Divine mercy—that when they appeal to the Scriptures as sanctioning what they are so unwilling to renounce, they do nothing less than put a blasphemous commentary on the contents of that sacred volume. (Cheers.) And it is worth mentioning, that the subject was practically viewed in that light by many eminent persons in the earlier ages of the church. For instance, Constantine exercised his authority in facilitating the manumission of slaves—allowing the ceremony to be performed on the Lord's day, because he considered it a religious or Christian act. Gregory the Great emancipated his own slaves, and encouraged others to do the same, on the principle that our Redeemer took upon him our flesh, in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin, and that, therefore, we should give back freedom to those whom the law of nations had deprived of it. Many bishops did the same thing, on the same or on similar grounds. They did this, not under the gradual influence of the Gospel, but from the knowledge and conviction, that it is directly hostile to slavery, and that its true and enlightened votaries cannot consistently hold human beings in bondage.

But the planters and Colonial Legislatures oppose with all their might the spread of Christianity among

the slave population. Of this fact there cannot be a doubt in any mind that has attended to the subject, and it is in vain for the advocates of slavery to deny it. I must not be told of insulated cases of good men among the planters allowing, or even encouraging ministers of religion to preach to the negroes. I must not be told of such persons as the Rev. Mr Bridges occasionally baptizing great numbers of them, as if the waters of baptism were equivalent to instruction in the doctrines and duties and consolations of Christianity. I must not be told of persons from our own country being called, and having churches built for them, that they may dispense the ordinances of religion. All this may be done—all this has been done—and yet the good effected can scarcely be estimated, so inconsiderable is it. But we have various broad and unquestionable facts, demonstrative of my statement, that to the diffusion of Christian truth among the slaves, their masters are invincibly repugnant. Need I remind you, in proof of this, of the case of Mr Harte in Barbadoes, a rector in the English church there, who, in dispensing the Lord's supper, an ordinance in which all his disciples are equally entitled and called upon to remember the dying love of Jesus—administered it to some people of colour, kneeling at the same altar with white people, though a space intervened between them, and had also preached the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ to all, whether bond or free; and on that account was denounced by a meeting of the Vestry of St Lucy, in a series of resolutions passed and published, as if he had thereby undermined the

very foundations of West India society? * Need I recall to your recollection the persecution of the Missionary Smith unto death, and of various other Missionaries of unimpeachable characters, for their zeal and fidelity in preaching the gospel of salvation to the slaves? Need I tell you of the destruction of

* The following are some of the resolutions passed on the occasion alluded to—Sir R. A. Alleyne in the chair—and they furnish unequivocal proof of what is contended for, viz., that the whites will not agree to the introduction of Christianity in its genuine spirit and entire form, because they conceive it subversive of slavery; and that ministers who are brave enough to declare the message from God, and to do his work faithfully, must lay their account with obloquy, resistance, and persecution.

“ Resolved 2d, That in all communities, distinctions of rank are necessary to the safety and well-being of society, and more especially in such a one as ours, where the hand of nature has drawn a mark of distinction between the proprietor of the soil, and its dependents. 3d, That any attempts proceeding from the ministers of religion to destroy these distinctions, to amalgamate and level the two classes of our country, must tend to endanger the safety and property of the white inhabitants, and cannot be otherwise than injurious to the civil condition, and religious improvement of the black population, by exciting in their minds discontent, and views inconsistent with their situation, and in the proprietors a just jealousy of those who are appointed to the office of the religious instruction of the slaves. 4th, That it is with deep concern that the inhabitants of this parish have observed the frequent attempts made by the rector of the parish, to destroy the distinctions which they deem so necessary to their safety, more especially evinced by his offensive sermon on Easter Sunday, and his disgraceful conduct while administering the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, thereby endeavouring to alienate the slaves from a sense of their duty, by inculcating doctrines of equality inconsistent with their obedience to their masters, and the policy of this island.”

places of worship by mobs, consisting not of the rabble, but of the better classes of the whites, who afford a specimen of the influence which in that unhappy quarter is actually brought to bear against our attempts to evangelize their bondsmen? Need I speak of their habitual, total, and legalized desecration of the Sabbath-day, which the slaves are compelled to make their own working-day and marketing-day, in bold defiance of that Divine commandment which says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and without whose sacred rest, the religion of the Bible can make no progress and obtain no footing? Need I speak of the enactment by which it is ordered that no place of worship shall be open,—no meeting for that purpose held, before sun-rise or after sun-set,—they who made the enactment being well aware that in this case, most of the slaves, having to toil from sun-rise to sun-set, would be unable to attend, and thus debarred from the means of improvement? And need I state, that notwithstanding all that has been said, and recommended, and enjoined upon this important subject, yet neither in the crown, nor in the chartered colonics, has any legal provision been made for securing to the slaves the essential benefits of education and Christian instruction?*

* An advocate for slavery thus writes, in a Jamaica Courant, of July last,—and his language may be considered as expressing the sentiments of the great body of those whose cause he has espoused: "If any gentleman wishes to convert the heathen, or to teach them to read and write, let him first free them out of his own pocket, and then he may make a kirk and a mill

And, Sir, I do not wonder at all this. For, in the *first* place, the slave-holders and their legislators know as well as we do, that Christianity is utterly inimical to slavery, which at all rates they are determined to uphold. They are ignorant, I dare say, but not so ignorant as not to see that if the slave population were all imbued with the spirit of the gospel, they would, with one great simultaneous movement, cast off the bonds which oppress them, and assert that liberty which the same gospel would teach them to "use as not abusing it:" For the spirit of the gospel is a spirit of liberty, not in any one department, but in all departments of human life; it is a general pervading principle, repulsive to bondage of whatsoever kind. "Whom the Son of God hath made free, he is free indeed." (Cheers.) For this reason they will resist all your endeavours to give a free circulation to religious truth, and a free ingress to Christian ministers, in the colonies and among the slaves. They may admit those teachers who will dwell chiefly on mere outward forms; who will be more ready to inculcate passive obedience, than justice and humanity; who will refrain from checking the tyranny and licentiousness of the masters; who will never take part with the slave when he is consigned to unmerited punishment; and who will be found on every occasion to advocate the cause of the planters, and the continuance of slavery. But they will not, they cannot, they dare not, admit those men who will be

of them. But for a recorder, attorney, or overseer to educate the slaves under their management, before the proprietor is remunerated, is downright robbery or madness."

bold enough to declare the whole counsel of God, and under the sanction and by the help of revelation, pursue it as one of their objects to put down, or even to mitigate, "one of the greatest evils that ever afflicted or disgraced humanity."

In the *second* place, they look on slaves as their property, in some degree, as they look on dogs and horses as their property; and so long as this is the case, it is impossible that they should be anxious for cultivating their minds, and imparting to them religious and moral instruction. And as a proof that this is the light in which the slaves are regarded by them, I beg to quote from this Edinburgh newspaper, of October 9, 1830, in which two estates in the West Indies (island of Tobago), are advertised for sale; the sale to take place on the 9th day of March next, in the Royal Exchange Coffee-rooms, Edinburgh. On one of these estates there are said to be "upwards of 100 negroes, 16 mules, 17 working oxen, 28 pasture cattle, besides sheep." And on the other, there are said to be "upwards of 120 negroes, 10 mules, 18 oxen, 18 cows, besides sheep and *other stock*!" Can any thing be more conclusive than this very fact, of the degraded light in which the slaves are considered by their owners, and of the unblushing effrontery with which these will avow their doctrine on that subject. Here, in the 19th century, when men's rights are so well ascertained and so liberally acknowledged—in the metropolis of the land of Bibles, of enlightened and Christian Scotland—in the very place where we have assembled to petition for the emancipation of slaves—we are insulted with an ad-

vertisement, telling us that, in our own public market, hundreds of human beings are to be exposed to sale, and classing them with mules, oxen, cows, sheep, and other stock ! (Cheers.) And when they have courage for this, can we suppose that they will care for giving the slaves religious instruction ? Aye, just as they will care for giving it to the oxen and the mules, with whom the slaves are put on a footing of equality ! To give religious instruction to beings whom they have reduced to such a level, and of whom they speak with such contempt, would be preposterous and absurd ; yes, and it would be dangerous too, for it would be to employ the means of unfitting them for being any longer *property*, and of subtracting them ere long from their "*other stock*." I sincerely hope, and I am certain, if we do what we ought to do, that, by the 19th of March next, when the horrible "roup" is to take place, the West India estates will be of little value, so far as the negroes are concerned in the transaction. (Cheers.)

In short, Sir, it is not to be expected, it is contrary to all the probabilities of the case, it is a moral impossibility, that religious instruction should be suffered to spread among the slaves ; and if religious instruction does not prevail, and produce its proper effects, it seems to be agreed on all hands, that no substantial amelioration can be accomplished, and then it follows, of course, that the whole scheme of gradual abolition falls to the ground. To look for it, or to seek for it, in such circumstances, is about as wise as the conduct of the simpleton, who was seen standing long on the brink of a mighty stream, and on being

asked why he stood there so long, replied, that he was waiting till the river had run by. (Cheers and laughter.)

I have no doubt that it will be said, Why will you not trust the Parliament and the Government, that they will abolish slavery "at the earliest practicable period?" I answer, that I place no confidence either in the Parliament or the Government, though I have much respect for both in some points;—my confidence rests on the public feeling of Great Britain and Ireland. (Cheers.) I freely and frankly declare it. I have had proofs of the growing attachment of the people to our cause; but I have had sore and melancholy experience of the indifference of the other two bodies,—instead of advancing, they have been retrograding. (Cheers.) I will give you some reasons why I cannot trust them, or anticipate anything from them, unless there be a strong constitutional pressure upon them from without, and unless the united voice of the empire is raised in favour of immediate emancipation.

In 1823, Mr Buxton, a distinguished philanthropist, and an ardent friend to the cause of abolition,—though a *gradualist*, for which I do not much like him, (laugh), brought forward a motion in the House of Commons to the following effect:—"That the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and the Christian religion, and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British dominions, with as much expedition as may be consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned." Nothing could be more moder-

ate than this,—it would have suited our friends whose resolutions and petition were rejected by you at our last meeting,—it was such as the most cautious and temperate of emancipationists might have acquiesced in, even without any serious opposition from a slave-holder. And yet its fate in the House of Commons was that of being refused and quashed. It did not please the Commons, though, in my view of the subject, it was a very inadequate proposal; and it was superseded by the following resolutions,—still more milk-and-water than Mr Buxton's motion,—which Mr Canning moved, and which were unanimously adopted.

“ 1st, That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the slave population in his Majesty's dominions.

“ 2d, That, through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population; such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

“ 3d, That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the slaves, the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property.

“ 4th, That these resolutions be laid before his Majesty.”

And in speaking in support of these resolutions the Right Hon. Gentleman who moved them, took occasion, if I recollect right, to deny the contrariety which was alleged to subsist between either the British constitution or the Christian religion, and colo-

nial slavery. And in all his discussions, though he sometimes spoke strongly against it, yet he expressed himself so much in the spirit of compromise, and with such excessive caution, as to convey the impression, that the administration which he guided were not hearty in the cause of abolition, and had no proper and deep-rooted convictions of its necessity.

Then, again, what happened in July this very year? Mr Canning's resolution had been followed by Orders in Council, recommending or prescribing certain changes in the treatment of slaves, which I shall not now enumerate or consider. But seven years had elapsed, and the mitigation and improvement thereby contemplated had never taken place. The most important of them had been peremptorily refused. The language of insult and rebellion had been used in the colonies towards the authorities in Great Britain. And so far as any thing had been done in apparent compliance with the Orders, it was found to be evasive, trifling, or nugatory. Well, at the close of the last session, Mr Brougham, in one of the most powerful speeches ever delivered within the walls of the House of Commons, brought forward a motion, "pledging the House to proceed at the earliest practicable period in the next session, to take into its serious consideration the mitigation and final abolition of slavery, together with the amendment of the administration of justice in the slave colonies of Great Britain." Could you have believed it to be possible that the House of Commons would negative such a motion as this? Had Mr Brougham gone a great deal farther in his demands, might it not have been expected,

that after the contempt and obstinacy manifested by the colonies, for seven long years, even these larger demands would have been acceded to without hesitation? And yet our worthy representatives rejected Mr Brougham's motion by a large majority! Does this afford any reason for our reposing confidence in Parliament? And now observe the sentiments which Government expressed in the course of the debate. In reply to the irresistible argument and matchless eloquence of Mr Brougham, Sir R. Peel "urged various objections to the expediency of giving the prospective pledge proposed by that honourable Member. He objected to it, among other reasons, because it pledged the House to the final abolition of slavery, whereas, he was not prepared to give any such pledge, until he saw the means of effecting it. He did so too, without adverting to compensation. He admitted he could not defend the title by which slaves were held as property; but still he thought the present holders of them had the same just claim to compensation with the holders of any other kind of property. He cautioned the House against pledging itself to any measure leading to emancipation. He admitted the power of parliament to impose laws on the colonies, but he could not contemplate, without horror, an idea of going to war with them to enforce such laws. He viewed the atrocities practised towards the slaves with deep regret, especially as he could not view them merely as if they were the acts of individuals, but as indicating that the sympathies of the colonists generally were enlisted on the side of the wrong-doer and against the slave. While he admit-

ted, in the fullest extent, the right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies on this question, yet he should rather let the necessary measures originate in the kindly feelings of the colonists themselves, for he thought little good could be expected from reluctant legislation."

Sir, one cannot help feeling surprise and indignation at such conduct on the part of his Majesty's ministers. I shall not stop to point out the contradictions and absurdities which occur in the Right Honourable Secretary's remarks. But look, I pray you, to what he announces as his opinion in July last on the subject of final abolition. He was pledged to that object by the Resolutions of 1823. And yet, with the utmost coolness, he comes forward, in 1830, and declares, in the face of that Christian country whose affairs he is employed to assist in administering, that he cannot agree to Mr Brougham's motion, for this among other reasons, that it pledges the House to the very thing to which he and the House were pledged seven years before; he cautions the House against entering into any such measure, leading to such a result; and he uses his ministerial influence to prevail upon the House to acquiesce in and support his tergiversation! Thus the Government are going back in this question,—there is just the more urgent necessity for our going forward,—and forward we shall go. (Loud cheers.) It now appears that the administration have not made up their minds as to the propriety or duty of rescuing, at any future time, or in any circumstances, 800,000 of their fellow-subjects from the most detestable bondage. They

have even broken their promise,—they have resiled from the assurance they long ago gave us, on this simple, though essential point. And yet we are exhorted to place reliance upon them as if they would not deceive us, and to petition for nothing more than *gradual* emancipation! Let us petition for *gradual* emancipation, say the advocates for that plan; for we cannot expect to get any thing more: *immediate* emancipation will not be granted. Why, Sir, if we complaisantly put our case into the hands of Ministers, it appears from the language of Sir R. Peel, that we shall get neither the one nor the other. But, Sir, it is not what we may succeed in obtaining, that should regulate the nature and extent of our request. It becomes us to ask what is morally right for us to have. That is the measure of our obligation, whatever be the consequence of our petitioning. It is our duty to knock, and never to cease knocking, at the doors of the Parliament and of the Ministry till we prevail upon them,—till we compel them, by constitutional means,—don't let me be misunderstood,—by constitutional means,—to grant what we demand, and what we deem absolutely necessary on the grounds of religion, justice, humanity, and every thing that is most dear and precious in the estimation of man,—I mean the immediate and total abolition of colonial slavery. (Loud cheers.)

As another reason for distrusting His Majesty's Government upon this vital question, I refer to the case of the Mauritius. A protecting duty had been laid on the sugar of the East, evidently for the benefit of the West India planters. But then the Mau-

ritius produced sugar by means of *slave* labour. It was proposed to relieve the Mauritius, thus situated, from the protecting duty, and continue to levy it on India. Remonstrances against this were strongly urged; but in vain. The Parliament and the Ministry, as if from an instinctive partiality to the produce of the labour and the blood of slaves, carried the measure into effect, and, in respect of the protecting duty, put the Mauritius on a footing with the colonies which are cultivated by slaves, and discouraged the cultivation in those parts only where it is carried on by free men! This fact by itself might evince that the Legislature and the Government are heterodox on the question of abolition altogether,—that they are unworthy of any thing like implicit confidence in the matter,—that they must be instructed and addressed by their constituents and by the people, in a tone which they feel it difficult or impossible to disregard.

I have still another proof to mention, of the little dependance that is to be placed on Government in this great cause, unless they shall be carefully watched, and vigorously urged by the people. Every one of us, *gradualists* and *immediatists*, allow the necessity of giving moral and religious tuition to the slaves. The *immediatists* insist upon it as a boon which should be given to them at any time and in any circumstances, though they also maintain that it is not necessary before emancipation, and that it can only be effectually imparted after emancipation is accomplished. And the *gradualists*, having it as their leading argument, that moral and religious training is an indispen-

sable preliminary to emancipation, are zealous that this should be realized without delay, in any measures that may be adopted, with a view to the object which we all profess to be pursuing. Nay, in the catalogue of those reforms which were proposed by the Orders in Council, this very thing stood first and foremost—which was very imposing to Christian men. But we all know that nothing was done. And no wonder; for the Government don't seem to be sincere on the subject. Why, Sir, they have abandoned this point, so far as they are concerned, and appear to have left to the discretion of the planters and Colonial Assemblies, from a persuasion—is it so?—that their Christian principles and feelings will lead them to do that for which any compulsory measure would be unavailing! Sir George Murray, indeed, who was secretary for the colonial department, in his letter, two years ago, to the governors of chartered colonies, did very forcibly urge upon them the duty of making provision by law for the objects alluded to. But then in the Order of Council, dated in February last, there is a new consolidated slave code for the crown colonies, which is also held out as a model on which the chartered colonies are to legislate; and yet *in that code there is not a single provision as to the means of education and religious instruction for the slaves!* Here the most momentous and essential of all the means of mitigating the evils of slavery, and preparing the slaves for emancipation, is deliberately and studiously omitted in the very document in which it ought to have been found; and as such a thing was proposed by our Government a year and-a-half before, we

are again compelled to conclude that they are not merely vacillating but retreating, and that therefore they are unworthy of that reliance which we are expected to place upon their earnestness or their sincerity in the cause even of final abolition.

And, Sir, would you know the secret of such proceedings as those to which I have now adverted? It is this—I must not blink it, and nobody who is acquainted with these matters can deny it—the West India interest is too strong for ministers to contend against in the House of Commons. This interest can command from 60 to 80 votes in that House, (Hear, hear,) no trifling matter, it must be admitted, in the eyes of those who have not lately been able to carry their measures by very triumphant majorities, and who, if they are desirous to succeed by the help of anti-abolition members, must naturally give a *quid pro quo*. Whatever the *quo* may have been, we see what the *quid* is—a refusal to give a pledge even for ultimate emancipation, or to adopt any plans, even on the principle of *gradualism*, that any one above the rank of a changeling can consider to be efficient. The West India interest, during the late elections, have made inconceivable exertions to augment and strengthen their power in Parliament. How far they have been successful in their attempts I cannot pretend to say. But one thing is clear; the greater their zeal is to uphold slavery, the greater ought to be ours to bring it to an immediate and “perpetual end.” And still more ought we to be upon our guard, and still more ought we to bestir ourselves, from the circumstances I am about to mention. It is communicated

in a letter from my friend Mr Brougham to Mr Pringle,* which, in the bustle that took place, was neglected to be read to you at last meeting, Mr Brougham, after regretting his inability to attend the meeting, to which he had been invited, intimates as certain, that two measures are in progress—one a parliamentary enactment, the other an executive arrangement—most interesting to the slave population, and requiring upon our part the most vigilant attention, not to say strenuous opposition. The former is the bill for facilitating the removal of negroes from settlement to settlement, which is at present a capital offence; the latter is the admission of the planters and others, in certain of the Crown colonies, to have a share in the government thereof. These plans, coupled with the declarations of Sir Robert Peel, at the close of last session, to which I have already alluded, demand the utmost exertion on the part of the abolitionists. And it is one object of Mr Brougham's letter to call upon all the opponents of slavery, whether members of Parliament or others, to be early at their post, and to be constant and jealous in their attentions to the proceedings of government.

I conclude this part of my argument by remarking that if we confide in Parliament and his Majesty's ministers for the abolition of slavery at all, or even for those measures which are thought by the *gradualists* to be requisite as preliminaries to it, we shall act contrary to the experience we have had of their

*The excellent Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, London, who happened to be in Edinburgh at the time the meeting referred to was held.

views and principles, and shall be guilty of disbelieving the votes they have come to, and the declarations they have made, in the face of the country whose people they represent, or whose affairs they administer. The things that they have done, and the things that they have failed to do, equally afford, I scruple not to say, ample demonstration that they are unsound upon the whole question at issue, and that they must be taught, urged, and constitutionally constrained to emancipate the slaves, by the people at large, who are as well qualified to judge of this subject—a subject of the plainest Christian and moral principle—as any statesman can be, within the limits of the three kingdoms.

It is impossible for me, Sir, to reply to all the attacks that have been made upon me in certain newspapers, since I publicly advocated the cause of immediate abolition. Some of these I disdain to answer. (Cheers.) They are obviously dictated by personal malice; I know them to be so; and I will not condescend to notice such contemptible abuse—such unworthy antagonists. (Continued cheers.) But wherever I find a grave argument, I am ready to meet it; and here I have something like argument in a letter (printed in some of the journals) from my friend Mr Combe, which he honourably acknowledges by putting his name to it. Permit me, Sir, to offer a few remarks on what Mr Combe has printed to influence his fellow-citizens in behalf of *gradual* emancipation.

Mr Combe acknowledges that we are right in the abstract principle for which we contend, but wrong in insisting on its application to the present case.

His doctrine of abstract principle is one to which, so far as I understand it, I cannot in conscience subscribe. What he calls an abstract principle, is nothing more nor less than this, that to make any man a slave, or to keep him a slave, is to violate his essential rights—to transgress eternal justice—to break the first laws of religion and morality. There is nothing abstract in this. The statement is, that a cruel wrong is done to the slave, in opposition to the will of God, which is the standard of all judgment, and of all conduct; and the necessary inference is, that the wrong must be immediately redressed, because, to persevere in inflicting it, is to persevere in the very thing which involves the guilt of disobeying God. To adopt the views which Mr Combe seems to avow, would in my opinion, lay every moral obligation at the feet of worldly expediency. I strongly suspect that he has got his notions of this subject from the West Indies; for I find that a Mr Hinds, in Barbadoes, when defending colonial slavery, asserts, that “all the evils of slavery are abstract, and that all its blessings are positive.” (Laughter.) Why, Sir, had Mr Hinds reversed the proposition, and said that all the evils of slavery are positive, and all its blessings abstract, he would have been nearer both to truth and common sense. Is the application of the cart-whip to the slave’s bare back an abstract evil? Yes; it tears the flesh from the bones, and that is abstraction sure enough. But in no other sense is the evil of the cart-whip abstract. And where are the positive blessings? I know of none, unless it be a blessing to give the poor slave as much food and

clothing and repose as will enable him to perform all the work he is compelled to do, in order to produce so much sugar, and put so much money into his master's pocket. (Cheers.) Not one whit less absurd is the proposition of my friend Mr Combe as to the abstract principle. That we should obey the will of the Almighty, and that we should not continue to do what he has forbidden, is not an abstract principle—it is a concrete principle, for ever dwelling in the Christian's mind, pressing upon his conscience, and influencing his conduct. Slavery—being in direct hostility to that will, and an impious defiance of it—is a crime which must be immediately and unreservedly abandoned, as much at least as any other species of criminality whatever.

My friend Mr Combe says, that to “emancipate the slaves instantly would be to turn them adrift from the stay which has hitherto sustained them, and to withdraw the motives which have hitherto inspired them, without preparing them to substitute better from their own resources.” The stay which has hitherto supported them is the care taken of them by their master in consideration of their labouring for his profit, and henceforth, they will just do that freely, which heretofore they have done by compulsion—for unless they work, I fear much that neither will they get any thing to eat. And then as to the *motives* which Mr C. speaks of with so much complacency—what, I ask, are these motives which have hitherto inspired the slaves? Inspiration, indeed! Does Mr C. refer to the lacerating cart-whip, the prickly ebony, the horrible bamboo? (Hear,

hear, and cheers.) And is he prepared to maintain either the justice or the mercy of such motives as these? O, we are told, that the slaves will not work without them. But, Sir, I now personate the slave, and I say, in answer to those who use such an argument, "What title have you to lay upon me one stripe, when I have committed no crime? Has God given you power to use me as your horse or your mule? Then show me your commission from Heaven that I may submit. (Cheers.) But you can show no such warrant. And, therefore, I am as free in the sight of my Maker as you are. Your keeping me in bondage is a crime—every exaction of labour from me is injustice—every punishment you inflict upon me is cruelty." Sir, I defy any man to say a word in reply to this appeal of the slave. And yet here Mr C. pleads for an indefinite continuance of that system which subjects the slaves to the grossest injustice and cruelty, and he does so under the very convenient and imposing phraseology of not "withdrawing the motives which have hitherto inspired them." (Loud cheers.)

As a proof of the necessity of gradual emancipation, Mr. C. tells us the old story of a man who had been confined for thirty years in the Bastile, and who, when liberated, at the destruction of that horrid state prison, became more miserable by the suddenness of his transition; and adds, that his liberators would have been both more rational and more humane, had they provided an asylum to receive him. This, I agree with Mr C. in thinking they ought to have done. But the analogy does not hold; for, instead

of proposing that the slaves should be turned adrift and cared for no more, we propose that such arrangements shall be made as are suited to the exigencies of their condition. This is what our petition prays for along with their emancipation. It is what they are entitled to in equity as well as in compassion; and far be it from us to say or do any thing that would disparage such a claim. But really Mr C. does not seem to entertain adequate ideas on the subject. "His eye," says he, "could not bear the effulgence of day, because its physical structure had accommodated itself to the twilight glimmering of a gloomy cell." It is really trifling with the subject to talk thus gravely on the man's eye being unable to bear the day-light—for that is the plain meaning of the words. Why, Sir, a green shade would have answered all the purpose. (Laugh.) And then, Sir, I would infinitely rather be a *freeman*, with my eyes hermetically sealed against all the beauties of the earth, and all the magnificence of the firmament, than I would be a *slave*, with my eyes wide open to look upon my chains that were never to be broken, (cheers) and upon my task-masters, who were never to have done with oppressing me, and upon my dearest kindred who were either enjoying a blessing from which I was for ever excluded, or to be my fellow-sufferers without hope, under the basest and bitterest of all human degradation. (Great cheering.)

Then Mr Combe speaks of the French Revolution of 1789 as contrasted with that of 1830. In the former case, the people were not prepared for freedom, and therefore ran to all manner of excess; whereas,

in the latter, they were prepared for it, by living under the charter, and therefore acted so as to gain the admiration of the world. But Mr C. should recollect that in the case of the French, in 1789, there was no superior power to check or prevent those outrages which owed their existence and their enormity to the infidelity, the profligacy, the despotism of the men who had ruled over them, while in the present case the slaves are to beset free by a Government which can coerce them when they become free as well as it coerces them now that they are in bondage, and may, by virtue of its dominion, and must, in the discharge of its duty, provide both for their well-doing and their well-being in the most effectual manner. And I may ask, moreover, if the French acted so nobly in 1830 from having been trained to correct thinking and feeling under the charter, how was it that they happened to get the charter? And whether it was likely they would have obtained such a schoolmaster as the charter for many ages, if that other revolution had not previously taken place, which notwithstanding filled all Europe with horror and alarm. At all events, between the case of the French Revolution and of the emancipation of the slaves there is no parallel. The circumstances are evidently and totally different.

Mr C. has also brought to his aid the subject of the press-gang,—we would be punished by the law, he says, if we deforced a press-gang, although we might urge the plea of eternal justice. Here again the analogy fails. The impressment of seamen is only justified by its defenders—I am none of them, how-

ever—on the ground of state necessity in a time of urgent peril; when that necessity ceases, they exchange the ship of war for the merchant vessel. And seamen, when they choose their profession, either know, or should know, that this is one of the risks to which they expose themselves by their preference of a maritime life. But slavery is engaged in, and carried on, by a class of individuals who have no other end to serve than the gratification of their own avarice; and, alas! the poor slaves have no option,—they are not allowed to fix on a profession which would exempt them from the hazard of bondage,—they are born slaves, or they are compelled to be slaves by a brute force which they cannot possibly resist,—and to the wrongs which they suffer there is no prospect of any termination. And with all this, we defend not the expedient of impressing seamen, and trust that the day is not far distant when it will be renounced as great impolicy and unnecessary hardship, though it may not be a violation of essential right, as slavery must unquestionably, and in every point of view, be deemed. (Cheers.)

The grand scheme which Mr C. proposes for rendering emancipation safe consists in “making it imperative on the planters to cultivate the moral and intellectual powers of their slaves.” Truly, Sir, I am sorry to observe that such a philosopher should publish such an absurd proposition. It betrays great ignorance of the state of matters in our colonies, and, besides, indicates an inacquaintance with the treatment and education of mind of which I could scarcely have suspected him to be capable. How can you force the

planters to do any thing which, they tell you, is to ruin them? With what propriety can you urge them to give instruction to beings whom they regard as their mere property, and classify with their mules, and oxen, and other stock? If, indeed, the burlesque view of phrenology, which has been given by its enemies, were correct and true, we might succeed in the enterprise, by putting the heads of slaves into moulds so formed as to produce all the proper bumps, and to bring them all out in their right relative proportions, so that we could elaborate the talents and dispositions that we wished to encourage (Laughter), though, even here, seeing the result was to be emancipation, the planters would much rather break the moulds than use them. But to expect that these gentlemen, after all the avowals they have made on this subject, and considering the means and opportunities which they have to thwart your every effort, should set about "cultivating the moral and intellectual powers of their slaves," because they were commanded to do so with a view to rob them of their property, is about the wildest and most chimerical idea that has ever been broached since the commencement of the controversy. Give the slaves their liberty, and then you can secure their full and universal instruction; but as long as they are slaves, held to be the property of their masters, and involved in all the disadvantages of colonial bondage, barriers to their religious and moral culture will be set up, which I defy all your parliamentary enactments, and all your orders in council, to surmount or to overthrow. The principles of the slave system, the doctrines of the slave-holders,

the habits and circumstances of the slave colonies, and the uniform history of the slave question,—all unite in demonstrating the vanity and fallaciousness of Mr C.'s benevolent speculation.

I am afraid, Sir, that I have exhausted the patience of the meeting (Cheers), but I hope you will permit me to say a few words on the subject of compensation. (Hear, hear.) And here I am free to confess, that on this point there is, among those who are for immediate emancipation, a difference of opinion. Some are for giving compensation to the slave-holders, and others are for refusing it. It is a fair subject of discussion, both in Parliament and out of it. And when the proper period arrives, it ought to be discussed with candour and deliberation. I have no scruple and no hesitation in saying, that, for my own part, I object to the doctrine of compensation. Our resolutions and our petition say nothing on that topic; but I am anxious to submit my views with respect to a claim which is most resolutely enforced by the enemies of abolition, and urged to such an extent, as to convince me that they use it as a bug-bear to frighten us from our purpose—as a check-mate to all our exertions for the deliverance of our oppressed fellow-subjects in the colonies.*

* The value of the slaves has been estimated by the anti-abolitionists at *eighty millions* sterling! This is about as extravagant as some numerical statements which have lately appeared in certain newspapers respecting the property and interests that are at stake in the event of emancipation. Nothing can be more absurd than these are, or more artful than the use that is made of them by their promulgators. The colonial

And here, Sir, I would observe, in the *first* place, that when our opponents plead for compensation, because our Legislature sanctioned slavery, they seem to proceed upon the supposition that *sanctioning* is equivalent to *compelling*. Our legislature did not compel the planters to engage in the slave system. The planters engaged in it voluntarily. The Legislature only gave them protection. And, therefore, they became liable to all the risks which, in these circumstances, such a commercial enterprise implied, just as they would have become liable to

property, for instance, is set down at L.200,000,000! And all this, the reader is left to infer, is to be destroyed if the negroes are rescued from slavery! The destructive effect of the West India climate on our soldiers and sailors, and the loss of revenue involved in the loss of lives, are most carefully concealed; but the imports and exports, the shipping tonnage, and the employment of seamen, are all stated at the utmost rate, as if they were to be utterly annihilated by the measure we are pursuing—as if the colonial soil were to become instantly sterile, or there would be nobody to cultivate it, or all demand for its produce would cease—as if ships, and men, and capital, and exchange of goods would not be called for as much at least when slaves and trade should be made free, as they are now that unjust monopoly and more detestable bondage are permitted to exist! And all the while, the statements referred to, sent forth by men of Christian principle and tender sensibility, are given to the entire exclusion of the claims which our enslaved fellow-subjects have to their liberty, on the ground of moral and religious obligation, whatever sacrifices of a pecuniary kind the duty of satisfying these indefeasible claims may require. We are found fault with for “unceremoniously” disposing of so much property—but what fault is found for “unceremoniously” keeping 800,000 human beings in bondage as the instruments of avarice and the victims of oppression?

all the risks peculiar to any other species of commercial enterprise in which they chose to adventure their capital.

Now, in the *second* place, they should have known, as they did know, that slave-holding is unchristian and immoral—a violation of the law of God. My friend Mr Combe asserts, in his letter, that “this argument would be irresistible if man were a perfect being”—by which he means to tell us, that the planters were ignorant of the truth I have statcd, respecting the inherent iniquity of making man the property of man. Strange! Admit this reasoning, and every miscreant may plead for impunity and permission to continue in sin—because, forsooth, man is not a perfect being! And truly, if the planters—white men—many of whom have been brought up in this country, and have received a liberal or Christian education—if they are so imperfect as not to know that it is contrary to the Divine will to make or to keep their brethren slaves, when is it that the slaves themselves will be fit for emancipation by that cultivation of their moral and intellectual powers, which Mr Combe asserts to be necessary as a prerequisite to their getting liberty? (Laugh.) Sir, I repeat my proposition, that the planters, when they embarked in the slave system, either knew, or ought to have known, that they embarked in a guilty speculation, and embarked in it on the implied condition, that whenever those whose duty it was, and in whose power it was, to emancipate the slaves, chose to put an end to the crime, their fictitious rights fell to the

ground, and they suffered no more than they were supposed to lay their account with, when they first intermeddled with the unrighteous traffic.

In the *third* place, they have been gaining by that system of slave-holding which we wish to abolish. If they have not found it profitable, why have they continued in it, and why are they still so desirous of continuing in it? And on the hypothesis, which is a fair one, that the thing has been lucrative, then surely it is perfectly equitable to let that consideration be a set-off, so far at least as it goes, against the demands which they make for compensation. Let them be contented with what they have already got, instead of grasping at more.

But let it be remembered, in the *fourth* place, that they have been all along gaining at our expense. The money which has gone into their pockets has been taken out of ours. We have been subjected to a kind of poll-tax to uphold their iniquitous system. In bounties for the sugars which they raise, and in protecting duties on the East India sugar, which for their sake is not allowed to come into the market on equal terms, we pay about a million and a half every year. And this gives L.800 or L.900 per annum to each slave-holding sugar-planter; some get more, some get less, but that is the average! We must not, however, forget to add to this the taxes which are levied from us to afford them protection, and which amount to no less an annual sum than above L.2,000,000. Really, Sir, if compensation is at all due, it is due to us, and not to the slave-holders. But, besides this, it is absurd to talk

of their right to compensation, when our Legislature may, without any act of emancipation whatever, but simply by ceasing to tax this country for their support and aggrandizement, render their slave property, as they call it, utterly useless. Our Parliament has only to withdraw that bounty, to repeal those protecting duties, and to reduce those naval and military establishments, which are employed for upholding the edifice of guilt and inhumanity that has been erected in the slave colonies, and it must tumble into ruins. And do not moral rectitude and sound policy declare, that it would be better for all parties simply to emancipate the slaves, and make the necessary arrangements for rendering that deed at once safe and efficacious? If this be not acceded to by the planters, they have no right to any further indulgence. We are called upon to petition—and Parliament are bound by every sacred obligation, and, if they are dutiful representatives, they will not fail to listen to us, when we ask them, for relief from the whole of that odious burden of taxation which is laid upon us, to the effect of oppressing a multitude of our fellow-subjects, and bearing us down with an accumulating load of national guilt. To talk of compensation, in these circumstances, I can scarcely regard in any other light than that of an insult.

Sir, I must add to this, that the slave-holders have long known of the intention—the determination of this country to abolish slavery. It has been told to them, and impressed upon them, in language that they could neither misapprehend nor forget.

And have they been preparing for such a consummation? Not in the very least degree. They have obstinately repelled all advice, and resisted all authority, on this point. And if from this cause they shall sustain any damage, whose fault is it? It is all and exclusively their own. And, consequently, to grant them compensation would be to reward their rebellion and perverseness.

I have to argue still farther, that this plea for compensation is not in accordance with what has been deemed right, or with what has been actually done, in analogous cases. When the slave *trade* was put an end to by legislative enactment, was any compensation asked or given, though many had embarked hundreds of thousands of pounds in the abominable commerce, and though the ships, being built for that peculiar service, were almost useless for any other? No, Sir. At one period the colliers in this country were all in a state of slavery. The Legislature at length set them free. Did their masters solicit, or did they obtain, any compensation? No, Sir. In neither of these cases was compensation ever mooted. In both of them the persons who were deprived of their *property*—I use the word from courtesy—had enjoyed protection and encouragement from the Legislature of the country, and might have used that as an argument in their own behalf. But nothing of the kind was attempted. And why, I ask, should any compensation be insisted on in the case of the slave-holder now, whose reason for claiming that species of redress is not a whit stronger

than that which might have been employed in either of the cases I have mentioned? (Cheers.)

If compensation is still proposed as a *sine qua non*, I appear in name of the slave, who is surely the most aggrieved party in this case, and is entitled to compensation before all others. And I say to the Legislature, "You cannot compensate me for the wrongs which the planters have inflicted upon me, with your countenance, and under your protection. These wrongs are beyond calculation. But, with a moderation which I have not experienced, I only ask you to emancipate me, and to give me the means of rendering my liberty available for my prosperity and happiness." And I say to the planters, "You owe me a debt which you cannot reckon, and which you cannot pay. The injuries I have endured in soul and body at your hand cannot be atoned for by all the treasures you possess. But I ask nothing more than this, that you do not oppose the scheme of mercy which my friends in Britain are devising in my favour,—that you ask no compensation from them as the price of my deliverance,—and that you willingly co-operate with them in undoing my heavy burden, and in providing for my temporal welfare, and my moral improvement." Now, Sir, if the Legislature and the planters shall turn a deaf ear to such appeals as these, then I must say that there is to be as much injustice in the deliverance as there was in the bondage itself,—and I must return to my demand for compensation to the slave, as having the prior right to it. And after you have fully compen-

sated him for the toils, and the stripes, and the debasement, and the unnumbered evils with which he has been iniquitously visited, I ask, what will be left in your coffers for his guilty and undeserving oppressors? (Great cheering.)

On this point, Sir, I have to observe, in the *last* place, that compensation is a fair and legitimate demand, only if loss be sustained. But according to our view of the effects of emancipation, not only will there be no loss to the planters, but they will be unspeakable gainers in safety, in comfort, in revenue. This we think demonstrable from all that is known of the comparative value of slave and of free labour, and of all the advantages that accompany the relationship of master and servant, as contrasted with the dangers and evils that are inseparable from the unhallowed connection of tyrant and slave.

These, Sir, are my sentiments with regard to compensation. But you will observe, that in the petition which our Committee proposes to send to Parliament, we have not introduced a word upon that subject. We do agree in objecting to it as a preliminary to abolition. We hold that there must be loss experienced, and clearly made out to have been sustained, before any thing like damages can be thought of or awarded. When the period arrives for ascertaining that point, it will be considered, and perhaps we may find it necessary to meet and petition in reference to it. (Cheers.) But, in the mean time, we can conceive some cases in which considerations of humanity to helpless individuals—to

widows, to minors, &c. would dictate a liberal treatment. And we do not wish the Legislature to shut its doors against any applications for redress. Let every one have free access there, and let the requests of every one meet with a patient hearing. Only let us have the abolition of slavery out and out, as that which necessarily takes precedence of all measures that can be suggested by its supposed effect on the fortunes of those whose own misconduct has led to it. And sure I am, Sir, that doing justice to the slaves is the best guarantee that can be given for doing justice to the planters. (Applause.) And equally sure I am, that the gross partiality hitherto shown to that body by our parliament and our government, afford security enough that their claims, whenever they are preferred, will not be rashly or wrongously rejected. (Cheering.)

There is yet one topic remaining, which I must touch upon, though I do it with great reluctance; but I could not do my duty to myself, nor to the great cause we have met to promote, were I to pass it over without particular notice. In the course of some remarks which I made at the late meeting, when proposing an amendment on the resolutions, I made use of the word *bloodshed*. I was immediately, and without any attention being paid to the way in which I introduced my observations, rudely assailed, and publicly accused, as one reckless of the shedding of blood. This is a charge, Sir, which I then declared, and now again declare, to be altogether unfounded. (Hear, hear.) And I must say, the charge came with a bad grace indeed from the

gentleman who made it,* considering that, but a few weeks before, he had presided at a meeting of the citizens of Edinburgh, assembled to congratulate the French people on their brave and heroic resistance to oppression on the part of their rulers, and on their attainment of those great political rights which they wrested from the hand of the tyrant, although these were acquired at the expense of 8000 human lives sacrificed in the course of that short and glorious struggle for liberty. (Great cheering.) And am I to be censured, rebuked, put down, reprobated as heedless of massacre, because I made the *supposition* that some blood might be spilt in emancipating 800,000 of our fellow-men,—yes, our fellow-subjects too, in the British colonies? After all, Sir, it was not I who made the supposition. It has been always advanced and pressed by the opponents of emancipation, and has been even thrown in our teeth by the advocates of *gradual* abolition, in whose name the Lord Provost spoke, not so much in the way of a mere supposition, as in that of a certainty, which they think forms a valid objection to our plan. I took up the objection as I found it, which I was both entitled and bound to do, and was using my best endeavour to repel it as a groundless and imaginary one. I distinctly stated—I called on the meeting to mark me when I stated—that for my own part I had not the slightest apprehension that any such consequences as our opponents professed to dread would ever ensue; but I added, that if cir-

* The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who was chairman of the meeting.

cumstances did render it necessary, I was not one of those who would say that we ought *not* to emancipate 800,000 human beings from otherwise hopeless bondage, merely because some blood might be shed in accomplishing that achievement of moral justice and Christian humanity. Alas! that we should be told in this our classical metropolis, and in this our enlightened day, that liberty is not to be aspired after, and not to be received even by slaves, unless the acquisition can be made with the absolute certainty of that acquisition being bloodless. I ask, Sir, in what region of the globe, and in what period of the world, it ever happened that any revolution in which despots were humbled, and the rights of the people were regained, without the risk at least of some such sacrifice as that which has excited so great a horror in our anti-abolitionists, and in our advocates for *gradualism*? And are we to be assailed by all this sentimentalism, while we have yet fresh in our memory the rejoicings that took place among us—and none rejoiced more heartily or loudly than the gentlemen who have now become so tender-hearted—when the armies of this country withstood the despot of Europe in a series of bloody battles, and at last overthrew him in that bloodiest of all the bloody fields that we fought for our independence—the field of Waterloo? (Immense applause.) Sir, I again repel the charge so unworthily brought against me; and maintain, that nothing but personal malignity, and an utter disregard of truth and candour, could have influenced those who afterwards deliberately and in print loaded me with such vile misre-

presentations. (Cheers, and some hissing.) Gentlemen may hiss as they please; but so far from pleading guilty either to the feeling or to the language imputed to me, I have from the first maintained that no such disastrous effects as those conjectured or anticipated by our opponents were in the very least degree likely to happen. On the contrary, Sir, if any such events happen, they will be occasioned by the delay that we deprecate, and are endeavouring to prevent. (Cheers.) Think you, Sir, that deliverance will not come ere long to that multitude of our fellow-creatures, who are groaning beneath the yoke of intolerable bondage in our colonial dependencies? Yes, deliverance for them will be achieved; and if our Legislature will not make haste to do what it can so easily and safely do, and what every principle of justice and every maxim of expediency calls upon it to do,—emancipate them without loss of time, by its own authority, and with its own arm; their deliverance will come with a terrible vengeance on those who are now the chief and the guilty cause of its being refused.

But if our rulers and legislators will undertake to emancipate the slaves, and do it as it ought to be done, immediately, I beg those who set themselves against such a measure, to point out the danger, and to prove it. The *onus* lies upon *them*. And what evidence do they give us? Where is it to be found? In what circumstances shall we discover it? From what principles and probabilities shall we infer it? We must not have mere hypothesis—mere allegations—mere fancied horrors, dressed up in frightful

language. We must have proof to substantiate, in some good measure, their theory of rebellion, warfare, and blood. If any such thing exists, let them produce it. Sure am I, it is not in the conduct which the slaves have hitherto maintained. Notwithstanding all that these poor beings have suffered from the exactions and ruthlessness of their oppressors, how seldom has any case of insurrection occurred, and how easily have all such tumults been put down ! And while we may expect a more cheerful submission after they are made free, than can be looked for so long as they are in cruel bondage, the same strength that has heretofore coerced them remains to coerce them still. We are told, indeed, to look to Hayti as furnishing an example of the horrors that would be realized in our colonies, if the slaves were immediately set free. But it appears to me that the case of Hayti, so far from being an instance in favour of the alarmists, is an instance that may be confidently appealed to in support of the more quiet expectations which we entertain of the result. The disturbances in that island, the insubordination and bloodshed which prevailed in it, were owing to the white men, who introduced the revolutionary principles of France, liberated the slaves to serve their own ambitious or revengeful purposes, and instigated them to the atrocities that were committed. But when the black population were left to themselves, they at length settled down into social order and regular government. Look at the Haytians as they are now, and have been for many years, and you see a peaceable, industrious, prosperous, and, as

far as can be in their circumstances, a happy as well as independent community! (Hear, hear.)

It is quite absurd and delusive to say that *eight hundred thousand* slaves are to be let loose at once upon the white population. This is calculated to alarm the ignorant and the timid; but it is in reality a gross misstatement. The slaves are not to be let loose upon their masters. They are merely to be made free, and are still to be made subject to that legal and adequate control which it is the duty of our government to impose upon all its subjects, in every part of the British dominions, and which it will especially exercise where the necessity for it is great and pressing. Then, from the 800,000, it is fair to subtract the half as consisting of females, and whom we cannot surely dread as very formidable in their power of resisting the constituted authorities, or the military force. Still further, subtract the male children under twelve years of age, who may be classed with the women as to their inability to frighten or annoy either the planters or his Majesty's troops. Yet again, subtract all who are aged and sickly, or of docile disposition and submissive habits, attached to the masters that have been kind and merciful to them, and who would either not engage to revolt, or assist in quelling it. Once more, subtract that portion who have, in spite of all obstructions, imbibed the principles and spirit of Christianity, who would employ their influence and their efforts to prevent every sort of rapine, and to give to the abolition its full moral effect—and whom, though brethren in Christ Jesus, your *gradualists*

would consign to unrequited toil, to undeserved suffering, to cruel bondage, during the remainder of their lives. Make all these deductions, and of the 800,000 slaves who, in the mass, are so apt to strike people's minds with terror, you will leave a number that the planters and the Government should be ashamed to confess that they could not cope with, or preserve in due submission and in tranquillity—especially as they happen to be in numerous divisions, separated from each other by sea, and therefore unable to concentrate their hostility, or to unite their efforts, if they should choose to rebel.

I request the meeting now to turn their attention to the state of the free black population, which forms an important element, though too little heeded, in the argument I am now addressing to you. The grand distinction in the colonies is between the white people and the people of colour. The white people treat all the people of colour with perfect contempt. And the latter have every reason to feel and show resentment to the former. But those of them who are free have been guilty of no attempts to overturn a dominion, which they must every day feel to be of the most galling kind. And think not that it is on account of their being less considerable in number. On the contrary, the white people, in the crown and chartered colonies, are only 119,000; whereas the free blacks amount to no fewer than 144,000. But, Sir, in the character and condition of the free blacks you will find a solution of the fact, and you will find, moreover, an additional security against all the evils which have been

so eagerly pressed upon us, as likely to result from an immediate and total abolition. I have told you their number, 144,000. Think next of their wealth. That is allowed to be very great. In some places their opulence rivals or surpasses that of the white people. And thus they have a stake in the country, which will make them more than ordinarily anxious to repress even the beginnings of any tumult, from which they could look for nothing but the plunder and destruction of their property. They are more than opulent; many of them are remarkably intelligent, men of good education, of liberal ideas, conversant with the government of states, and with whatever contributes to the public weal. They have even established newspapers, in which they discuss the very question of the abolition of slavery, and advocate the measure both with zeal and talent, and in other respects display an extent of knowledge, a power of reasoning, and a tone of moral and religious feeling, which might be transferred with considerable advantage into a certain portion of the newspaper press of Edinburgh. (Cheers and laughter.) Besides this, the free blacks are distinguished by their loyalty, and their decided attachment to the mother country—so much so, that when, in consequence of the interference of our government, the white colonists threatened to rebel, they were told, through the medium of the journals I have alluded to, that if they did so, they might be assured that they would be opposed by the free blacks, and by all the coloured population to a man, in defence of British sovereignty. (Great applause). And in

addition to their loyalty, consider their general good conduct. I do not hold them out as free from many and great vices. They retain, in some instances, the greatest of all vices, that of keeping slaves. This, however, arises, in a great measure, it is probable, from the external circumstances in which they find themselves, by reason of the general system that prevails around them. And it augurs well for their being ready to renounce that abominable nuisance, that their newspapers plead for emancipation,* and that they are superior to the white population as to public morals. By a return to the House of Commons of the number of criminal prosecutions in Jamaica, we perceive that the criminal prosecutions of the whites were, to those of the free blacks, in the proportion of *three to one*. (Great cheering.) Nay, but, my friends, you have only got one half of the interesting fact: for I have to add, that the white population is, to that of the free blacks, nearly as *one to three*—there being of free blacks 40,000, and of whites only 15,000! (Continued cheering.) Taking into account the circumstances I have just stated respecting the free blacks—their number, their wealth, their loyalty, their general character, every one must see that we may safely look to that portion of the West India community, as standing between the colonists and all danger that may be appre-

* It has been proposed in Jamaica to form a Society there, for the abolition of Negro Slavery; the proposal seems to be favourably entertained; and there can be little doubt that such an institution, if wisely conducted, will be productive of most beneficial effects.

hended from the emancipation of the slaves; and coupling this with the other particulars to which I formerly adverted, it does appear to me that we have the amplest security for that measure, how soon soever it may be carried, being as bloodless and peaceable as our hearts could desire. I have no fear—no, not the shadow of it, that any of the dreaded mischiefs will ensue from the course of proceeding that we are pressing on the Legislature. In my conscience I deem them all chimerical, and got up chiefly for the purpose of deterring us from insisting on that act of simple but imperative justice which we call upon the British Parliament to perform. (Applause.)

But if you push me, and still urge the argument of insurrection and bloodshed, for which you are far more indebted to fancy than to fact, as I have shown you, then I say, be it so. I repeat that maxim, taken from a heathen book, but pervading the whole Book of God, *Fiat justitia—ruat cælum*. Righteousness, Sir, is the pillar of the universe. Break down that pillar, and the universe falls into ruin and desolation. But preserve it, and though the fair fabric may sustain partial dilapidation, it may be rebuilt and repaired—it *will* be rebuilt, and repaired, and restored to all its pristine strength, and magnificence, and beauty. (Cheering.) If there must be violence, let it even come, for it will soon pass away—let it come and rage its little hour, since it is to be succeeded by lasting freedom, and prosperity, and happiness. (Cheering.) Give me the hurricane rather than the pestilence. Give me the

hurricane, with its thunder, and its lightning, and its tempest;—give me the hurricane, with its partial and temporary devastations, awful though they be;—give me the hurricane, with its purifying, healthful, salutary effects;—give me that hurricane, infinitely rather than the noisome pestilence, whose path is never crossed, whose silence is never disturbed, whose progress is never arrested, by one sweeping blast from the heavens; which walks peacefully and sullenly through the length and breadth of the land, breathing poison into every heart, and carrying havoc into every home, enervating all that is strong, defacing all that is beautiful, and casting its blight over the fairest and happiest scenes of human life—and which, from day to day, and from year to year, with intolerant and interminable malignity, sends its thousands and its tens of thousands of hapless victims into the ever-yawning and never-satisfied grave!

(Cheering and waving of hats for several minutes, followed the conclusion of Dr Thomson's speech, which lasted for about two hours and a half.)

APPENDIX.

At the meeting which took place on Friday, the 8th October, and at which Dr Thomson moved his amendment on the resolutions that were brought forward, he objected to the clause which proposed that all the children born on and after a particular day (January 1, 1831,) should be declared free. This clause, the Committee on the platform, acquiescing in his objection, agreed to omit. And as it was not referred to in the petition which he submitted to the meeting of the 19th October, he did not think it necessary to discuss that part of the subject. It may be useful, however, to state here the grounds on which such an arrangement appeared to him inadmissible.

In the *first* place, it amounts to an indirect sanction of the continued slavery of all who are now alive, and of all who may be born before the period fixed upon. This is a renunciation of the great moral principles upon which the demand for abolition proceeds. It consigns more than 800,000 human beings to bondage and oppression, while their title to freedom is both indisputable and acknowledged. And it is not merely an inconsistency on the part of the petitioners, and a violation of the duty which they owe to such a multitude of their fellow-men, but it weakens or surrenders the great argument by which they enforce their application for the extinction of colonial slavery.

Besides, it is vain to expect that the planters will acquiesce in such a prospective measure, any more than in

the liberation of the existing slaves; for the progeny of the existing slaves must be considered by them as much a part of their property as these slaves themselves. And they would regard it equally unjust to deprive them of what is hereafter to be produced from their own slave stock, as it would be to deprive a farmer, by an anticipating law, of all the foals and of all the calves that might be produced in his stable and in his cow-house, after a given specified date.

We must be true to our own maxims, which are taken from the word of God; and ask for all that we are entitled to have on the ground of justice and humanity, and be contented with nothing less.

In the *second* place, the plan objected to is not merely an acquiescence in the continuance of crime, it is a violation of the best feelings of our nature. For, let any man but reflect on the circumstances of children being born to slavery, merely because they came into the world the last hour of December 1830, instead of the first hour of January 1, 1831—and of children in the same family, brothers and sisters—some of them destined to bondage for life, and others gifted with freedom, for no other reason than that the former were born before, and the latter after, a particular day of a particular year—and of parents being unjustly and inhumanly flogged in the very sight of their offspring arbitrarily made free, while they are as arbitrarily kept slaves—let any man but reflect on these things, and unless the sensibilities of his heart be paralysed even to deadness, he must surely revolt at such a cruel and cold-blooded allotment in the fortune of those little ones, and be satisfied with nothing short of the emancipation of the whole community, without a single exception.

In the *third* place, supposing all children born after January 1, 1831, were declared free, how are they to be educated? That they may be prepared for the enjoyment of that liberty with which you have invested them, they must undergo a particular and appropriate training. So

say the *gradualists*. Very well; under whom are they to get this training? Are they to be separated from their parents? Is that dearest of natural ties to be broken asunder? Is this necessary for your plan? And are not you thus endeavouring to cure one species of wickedness by the instrumentality of another? But if they are to be left with their parents and brought up under their care, then either they will be imbued with the faults and degeneracies that are characteristic of slavery, and consequently be as unfit for freedom as those who have not been disenthralled; or they will be well nurtured and well instructed by their parents, and this implies a confession that their parents themselves are sufficiently prepared for liberty, and that there is no good reason for withholding from them the boon that is bestowed upon their children.

Whatever view, in short, we take of the question, the prospective plan is full of difficulty or contradictions, and we are made more sensible than ever that there is nothing left for us, but to take the consistent, honest, uncompromising course of demanding the abolition of slavery with respect to the present, as well as to every future generation of the negroes in our colonies.

In 1792, Mr Dundas proposed that the slave-trade should cease in 1800, and also that every negro child born after that period in the West Indies should be free. To this proposal, Mr Wilberforce and his friends resolutely objected. They did so on religious and moral grounds—which that distinguished friend of humanity satisfactorily explained at the last meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in London. It was well that the abolitionists had the wisdom and the fortitude to refuse the insidious boon which was offered to them by Mr Dundas. Had they accepted of it, they would not only have forfeited the reputation which they had acquired by acting upon steady, fixed, immutable principles, but pretexts would have been found for withdrawing the concessions that had been made merely to avoid incessant

warfare on such a topic; at any rate, the whole tone of the argument for abolishing the trade and emancipating the slaves, would have been lowered in a lamentable degree; and, in all probability, the prospect of achieving the latter of these objects, would at this moment have been more obscure and more remote than it appears to be, even amidst all the discouragements we are experiencing. Let us not do evil that good may come. Let us keep upon the high ground which we occupy. Our triumph may not, for that reason, be so speedy, though in this respect also we have good hope; but it will be more certain, and when it does come, it will be more complete, more gratifying, more honourable, and more permanent.